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WILSON'S

TALES OF THE BORDERS,

AND OF SCOTLAND.

WILSON'S

TALES OF THE BORDERS,

AND OF SCOTLAND

HISTORICAL, TRADITIONARY, AND IMAGINATIVE.

WITH A GLOSSARY

REVISED BY ALEXANDER LEIGHTON,

ONE OF THE ORIGINAL EDITORS AND CONTRIBUTORS.

NEW EDITION.

VOL. I.

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PREFACE.

This series of Tales, now so well known in this country and also in America, was begun by John Mackay Wilson, originally a printer, and who subsequently betook himself to literature. In the beginning of the undertaking he was inspired by a success probably greater than he had ever anticipated, and a sudden and wide-spread reputation induced him to overtask his energies, in a manner inconsistent with the care due to a delicate constitution. After having carried on the work, almost single-handed, for a period of more than a year—furnishing a tale every week—he took ill, and died. Subsequently, the charge of conducting the work devolved upon the present Editor, who was fortunate enough to secure the assistance of certain writers well qualified to sustain the reputation which the first part of the series had acquired. Among these were the late Hugh Miller, the late Professor Thomas Gillespie of St. Andrew's, Alexander Campbell, Alexander and John Bethune, and John Howell, all of whom possessed those natural gifts, enabling them to succeed in a species of literature which, while in one sense it may be called the most easy, is, in another, perhaps among the most difficult of any.

The only condition by which the natural promptings of their genius might have been restrained was, that the contributions should be genuine stories, not the ordinary mixture of narrative, didactic essay, and fanciful prolusion, but tales in the proper every-day sense, with such an objectiveness as would portray, graphically and naturally, the men and women of the times, acting on the stage where they were destined to perform their strange parts, and would exclude all false colourings of a sentimental fiction, belonging to mere subjective moods of the writer's fancy or feeling. The greatest care was also taken with the moral aspect of the Tales, with the view that parents and guardians might feel a confidence that, in committing them into the hands of their children and wards, they would be imparting the means of instruction, and at the same time securing a guarantee for the growth of moral convictions. By such means, the Tales were kept true to history, legend, morality, and man's nature, and, at the same time, made acceptable to the great class of readers who had declared their predilection in favour of the manner of the early examples.

The Tales in this series have been carefully selected and revised; and the reader will be pleased to be informed that, in the course of the publication, there will, for the purpose of imparting to it a fresh interest, be inserted New Tales, written by authors deemed capable of attaining the mark of the Orginal Series.

York Lodge, Trinity,
March, 1857.

WILSON'S

TALES OF THE BORDERS,

AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE VACANT CHAIR.*

You have all heard of the Cheviot mountains. They are a rough, rugged, majestic chain of hills, which a poet might term the Roman wall of nature; crowned with snow, belted with storms, surrounded by pastures and fruitful fields, and still dividing the northern portion of Great Britain from the southern. With their proud summits piercing the clouds, and their dark rocky declivities frowning upon the glens below, they appear symbolical of the wild and untamable spirits of the Borderers who once inhabited their sides. We say, you have all heard of the Cheviots, and know them to be very high hills, like a huge clasp riveting England and Scotland together; but we are not aware that you may have heard of Marchlaw, an old, gray-looking farm-house, substantial as a modern fortress, recently, and, for aught we know to the contrary, still inhabited by Peter Elliot, the proprietor of some five hundred surrounding acres. The boundaries of Peter's farm, indeed, were defined neither by fields, hedges, nor stone walls. A wooden stake here, and a stone there, at considerable distances from each other, were the general landmarks; but neither Peter nor his neighbours considered a few acres

* Our commencement with "The Vacant Chair"—the first written of the Tales of the Borders—is not inconsistent with our principle of selection in this edition, which is to distribute the contributions of the authors, so as to secure variety, without any view to an early exhaustion of the best of the Tales.—*Ed.*

worth quarrelling about; and their sheep frequently visited each other's pastures in a friendly way, harmoniously sharing a family dinner, in the same spirit as their masters made themselves free at each other's tables.

Peter was placed in very unpleasant circumstances, owing to the situation of Marchlaw House, which, unfortunately, was built immediately across the "ideal line," dividing the two kingdoms; and his misfortune was, that, being born within it, he knew not whether he was an Englishman or a Scotchman. He could trace his ancestral line no farther back than his great-grandfather, who, it appeared from the family Bible, had, together with his grandfather and father, claimed Marchlaw as their birth-place. They, however, were not involved in the same perplexities as their descendant. The parlour was distinctly acknowledged to be in Scotland, and two-thirds of the kitchen were as certainly allowed to be in England: his three ancestors were born in the room over the parlour, and, therefore, were Scotchmen beyond question; but Peter, unluckily, being brought into the world before the death of his grandfather, his parents occupied a room immediately over the debatable boundary line which crossed the kitchen. The room, though scarcely eight feet square, was evidently situated between the two countries; but, no one being able to ascertain what portion belonged to each, Peter, after many arguments and altercations upon the subject, was driven to the disagreeable alternative of confessing he knew not what countryman he was. What rendered the confession the more painful was, that it was Peter's highest ambition to be thought a Scotchman. All his arable land lay on the Scotch side; his mother was collaterally related to the Stuarts; and few families were more ancient or respectable than the Elliots. Peter's speech, indeed, bewrayed him to be a walking partition between the two kingdoms, a living representation of the Union; for in one word he pronounced

the letter *r* with the broad, masculine sound of the North Briton, and in the next with the liquid *burr* of the Northumbrians.

Peter, or, if you prefer it, Peter Elliot, Esquire of Marchlaw, in the counties of Northumberland and Roxburgh, was, for many years, the best runner, leaper, and wrestler between Wooler and Jedburgh. Whirled from his hand, the ponderous bullet whizzed through the air like a pigeon on the wing; and the best putter on the Borders quailed from competition. As a feather in his grasp, he seized the unwieldy hammer, swept it round and round his head, accompanying with agile limb its evolutions, swiftly as swallows play around a circle, and hurled it from his hands like a shot from a rifle, till antagonists shrunk back, and the spectators burst into a shout. "Well done, Squire! the Squire for ever!" once exclaimed a servile observer of titles. "Squire! wha are ye squiring at?" returned Peter. "Confound ye! where was ye when I was christened Squire? My name's Peter Elliot—your man, or onybody's man, at whatever they like!"

Peter's soul was free, bounding, and buoyant, as the wind that carolled in a zephyr, or shouted in a hurricane, upon his native hills; and his body was thirteen stone of healthy substantial flesh, steeped in the spirits of life. He had been long married, but marriage had wrought no change upon him. They who suppose that wedlock transforms the lark into an owl, offer an insult to the lovely beings who, brightening our darkest hours with the smiles of affection, teach us that that only is unbecoming in the husband which is disgraceful in the man. Nearly twenty years had passed over them; but Janet was still as kind, and, in his eyes, as beautiful as when, bestowing on him her hand, she blushed her vows at the altar; and he was still as happy, as generous, and as free. Nine fair children sat around their domestic hearth, and one, the youngling of

the flock, smiled upon its mother's knee. Peter had never known sorrow; he was blest in his wife, in his children, in his flocks. He had become richer than his fathers. He was beloved by his neighbours, the tillers of his ground, and his herdsmen; yea, no man envied his prosperity. But a blight passed over the harvest of his joys, and gall was rained into the cup of his felicity.

It was Christmas-day, and a more melancholy-looking sun never rose on the 25th of December. One vast, sable cloud, like a universal pall, overspread the heavens. For weeks, the ground had been covered with clear, dazzling snow; and as, throughout the day, the rain continued its unwearied and monotonous drizzle, the earth assumed a character and appearance melancholy and troubled as the heavens. Like a mastiff that has lost its owner, the wind howled dolefully down the glens, and was re-echoed from the caves of the mountains, as the lamentations of a legion of invisible spirits. The frowning, snow-clad precipices were instinct with motion, as avalanche upon avalanche, the larger burying the less, crowded downward in their tremendous journey to the plain. The simple mountain rills had assumed the majesty of rivers; the broader streams were swollen into the wild torrent, and, gushing forth as cataracts, in fury and in foam, enveloped the valleys in an angry flood. But, at Marchlaw, the fire blazed blithely; the kitchen groaned beneath the load of preparations for a joyful feast; and glad faces glided from room to room.

Peter Elliot kept Christmas, not so much because it was Christmas, as in honour of its being the birthday of Thomas, his first-born, who, that day, entered his nineteenth year. With a father's love, his heart yearned for all his children; but Thomas was the pride of his eyes. Cards of apology had not then found their way among our Border hills; and as all knew that, although Peter admitted no spirits within his threshold, nor a drunkard at his table, he was, never-

theless, no niggard in his hospitality, his invitations were accepted without ceremony. The guests were assembled; and the kitchen being the only apartment in the building large enough to contain them, the cloth was spread upon a long, clear, oaken table, stretching from England into Scotland. On the English end of the board were placed a ponderous plum-pudding, studded with temptation, and a smoking sirloin; on Scotland, a savoury and well-seasoned haggis, with a sheep's-head and trotters; while the intermediate space was filled with the good things of this life, common to both kingdoms and to the season.

The guests from the north and from the south were arranged promiscuously. Every seat was filled—save one. The chair by Peter's right hand remained unoccupied. He had raised his hands before his eyes, and besought a blessing on what was placed before them, and was preparing to carve for his visitors, when his eyes fell upon the vacant chair. The knife dropped upon the table. Anxiety flashed across his countenance, like an arrow from an unseen hand.

"Janet, where is Thomas?" he inquired; "hae nane o' ye seen him?" and, without waiting an answer, he continued—"How is it possible he can be absent at a time like this? And on such a day, too? Excuse me a minute, friends, till I just step out and see if I can find him. Since ever I kept this day, as mony o' ye ken, he has always been at my right hand, in that very chair; and I canna think o' beginning our dinner while I see it empty."

"If the filling of the chair be all," said a pert young sheep-farmer, named Johnson, "I will step into it till Master Thomas arrive."

"Ye're not a faither, young man," said Peter, and walked out of the room.

Minute succeeded minute, but Peter returned not. The guests became hungry, peevish, and gloomy, while an excellent dinner continued spoiling before them. Mrs. Elliot,

whose good-nature was the most prominent feature in her character, strove, by every possible effort, to beguile the unpleasant impressions she perceived gathering upon their countenances.

"Peter is just as bad as him," she remarked, "to hae gane to seek him when he kenned the dinner wouldna keep. And I'm sure Thomas kenned it would be ready at one o'clock to a minute. It's sae unthinking and unfriendly like to keep folk waiting." And, endeavouring to smile upon a beautiful black-haired girl of seventeen, who sat by her elbow, she continued in an anxious whisper—"Did ye see naething o' him, Elizabeth, hinny?"

The maiden blushed deeply; the question evidently gave freedom to a tear, which had, for some time, been an unwilling prisoner in the brightest eyes in the room; and the monosyllable, "No," that trembled from her lips, was audible only to the ear of the inquirer. In vain Mrs. Elliot despatched one of her children after another, in quest of their father and brother; they came and went, but brought no tidings more cheering than the moaning of the hollow wind. Minutes rolled into hours, yet neither came. She perceived the prouder of her guests preparing to withdraw, and, observing that "Thomas's absence was so singular and unaccountable, and so unlike either him or his father, she didna ken what apology to make to her friends for such treatment; but it was needless waiting, and begged they would use no ceremony, but just begin."

No second invitation was necessary. Good humour appeared to be restored, and sirloins, pies, pasties, and moorfowl began to disappear like the lost son. For a moment, Mrs. Elliot apparently partook in the restoration of cheerfulness; but a low sigh at her elbow again drove the colour from her rosy cheeks. Her eye wandered to the farther end of the table, and rested on the unoccupied seat of her husband, and the vacant chair of her first-born. Her heart

fell heavily within her; all the mother gushed into her bosom; and, rising from the table, "What in the world can be the meaning o' this?" said she, as she hurried, with a troubled countenance, towards the door. Her husband met her on the threshold.

"Where hae ye been, Peter?" said she, eagerly; "hae ye seen naething o' him?"

"Naething! naething!" replied he; "is he no cast up yet?" And, with a melancholy glance, his eyes sought an answer in the deserted chair. His lips quivered, his tongue faltered.

"Gude forgie me!" said he; "and such a day for even an enemy to be out in! I've been up and doun every way that I can think on, but not a living creature has seen or heard tell o' him. Ye'll excuse me, neebors," he added, leaving the house; "I must awa again, for I canna rest."

"I ken by mysel', friends," said Adam Bell, a decent-looking Northumbrian, "that a faither's heart is as sensitive as the apple o' his e'e; and I think we would show a want o' natural sympathy and respect for our worthy neighbour, if we didna every one get his foot into the stirrup without loss o' time, and assist him in his search. For, in my rough, country way o' thinking, it must be something particularly out o' the common that would tempt Thomas to be amissing. Indeed, I needna say *tempt*, for there could be no inclination in the way. And our hills," he concluded, in a lower tone, "are not ower chancy in other respects, besides the breaking up o' the storm."

"Oh!" said Mrs. Elliot, wringing her hands, "I have had the coming o' this about me for days and days. My head was growing dizzy with happiness, but thoughts came stealing upon me like ghosts, and I felt a lonely soughing about my heart, without being able to tell the cause; but the cause is come at last! And my dear Thomas—the very pride and staff o' my life—is lost!—lost to me for ever!"

"I ken, Mrs. Elliot," replied the Northumbrian, "it is an easy matter to say compose yourself, for them that dinna ken what it is to feel. But, at the same time, in our plain, country way o' thinking, we are always ready to believe the worst. I've often heard my father say, and I've as often remarked it myself, that, before anything happens to a body, there is *a something* comes ower them, like a cloud before the face o' the sun; a sort o' dumb whispering about the breast from the other world. And though I trust there is naething o' the kind in your case, yet, as you observe, when I find myself growing dizzy, as it were, with happiness, it makes good a saying o' my mother's, poor body! 'Bairns, bairns,' she used to say, 'there is ower muckle singing in your heads to-night; we will have a shower before bedtime.' And I never, in my born days, saw it fail."

At any other period, Mr. Bell's dissertation on presentiments would have been found a fitting text on which to hang all the dreams, wraiths, warnings, and marvellous circumstances, that had been handed down to the company from the days of their grandfathers; but, in the present instance, they were too much occupied in consultation regarding the different routes to be taken in their search.

Twelve horsemen, and some half-dozen pedestrians, were seen hurrying in divers directions from Marchlaw, as the last faint lights of a melancholy day were yielding to the heavy darkness which appeared pressing in solid masses down the sides of the mountains. The wives and daughters of the party were alone left with the disconsolate mother, who alternately pressed her weeping children to her heart, and told them to weep not, for their brother would soon return; while the tears stole down her own cheeks, and the infant in her arms wept because its mother wept. Her friends strove with each other to inspire hope,

and poured upon her ear their mingled and loquacious consolation. But one remained silent. The daughter of Adam Bell, who sat by Mrs. Elliot's elbow at table, had shrunk into an obscure corner of the room. Before her face she held a handkerchief wet with tears. Her bosom throbbed convulsively; and, as occasionally her broken sighs burst from their prison-house, a significant whisper passed among the younger part of the company.

Mrs. Elliot approached her, and taking her hand tenderly within both of hers—"O hinny! hinny!" said she, "yer sighs gae through my heart like a knife! An' what can I do to comfort ye? Come, Elizabeth, my bonny love, let us hope for the best. Ye see before ye a sorrowin' mother!—a mother that fondly hoped to see you an'—I canna say it!—an' am ill qualified to gie comfort, when my own heart is like a furnace! But, oh! let us try and remember the blessed portion, 'Whom the LORD loveth HE chasteneth,' an' inwardly pray for strength to say, 'His will be done!'"

Time stole on towards midnight, and one by one the unsuccessful party returned. As foot after foot approached, every breath was held to listen. "No, no, no!" cried the mother again and again, with increasing anguish, "it's no the foot o' my ain bairn;" while her keen gaze still remained riveted upon the door, and was not withdrawn, nor the hope of despair relinquished, till the individual entered, and, with a silent and ominous shake of his head, betokened his fruitless efforts. The clock had struck twelve; all were returned save the father. The wind howled more wildly; the rain poured upon the windows in ceaseless torrents; and the roaring of the mountain rivers gave a character of deeper ghostliness to their sepulchral silence; for they sat, each wrapt in forebodings, listening to the storm; and no sounds were heard, save the groans of the mother, the weeping of her children,

and the bitter and broken sobs of the bereaved maiden, who leaned her head upon her father's bosom, refusing to be comforted.

At length the barking of the farm-dog announced footsteps at a distance. Every ear was raised to listen, every eye turned to the door; but, before the tread was yet audible to the listeners—"Oh! it is only Peter's foot!" said the miserable mother, and, weeping, rose to meet him.

"Janet, Janet!" he exclaimed, as he entered, and threw his arms around her neck, "what's this come upon us at last?"

He cast an inquisitive glance around his dwelling, and a convulsive shiver passed over his manly frame, as his eye again fell on the vacant chair, which no one had ventured to occupy. Hour succeeded hour, but the company separated not; and low, sorrowful whispers mingled with the lamentations of the parents.

"Neighbours," said Adam Bell, "the morn is a new day, and we will wait to see what it may bring forth; but, in the meantime, let us read a portion o' the Divine word, an' kneel together in prayer, that, whether or not the day-dawn cause light to shine upon this singular bereavement, the Sun o' Righteousness may arise wi' healing on his wings, upon the hearts o' this afflicted family, an' upon the hearts o' all present."

"Amen!" responded Peter, wringing his hands; and his friend, taking down the Ha' Bible, read the chapter wherein it is written—"It is better to be in the house of mourning than in the house of feasting;" and again the portion which sayeth—"It is well for me that I have been afflicted, for before I was afflicted I went astray."

The morning came, but brought no tidings of the lost son. After a solemn farewell, all the visitants, save Adam Bell and his daughter, returned every one to their own house; and the disconsolate father, with his servants, again

renewed their search among the hills and surrounding villages.

Days, weeks, months, and years rolled on. Time had subdued the anguish of the parents into a holy calm; but their lost first-born was not forgotten, although no trace of his fate had been discovered. The general belief was, that he had perished on the breaking up of the snow; and the few in whose remembrance he still lived, merely spoke of his death as a "very extraordinary circumstance," remarking that "he was a wild, venturesome sort o' lad."

Christmas had succeeded Christmas, and Peter Elliot still kept it in commemoration of the birthday of him who was not. For the first few years after the loss of their son, sadness and silence characterized the party who sat down to dinner at Marchlaw, and still at Peter's right hand was placed the vacant chair. But, as the younger branches of the family advanced in years, the remembrance of their brother became less poignant. Christmas was, with all around them, a day of rejoicing, and they began to make merry with their friends; while their parents partook in their enjoyment, with a smile, half of approval and half of sorrow.

Twelve years had passed away; Christmas had again come. It was the counterpart of its fatal predecessor. The hills had not yet cast off their summer verdure; the sun, although shorn of its heat, had lost none of its brightness or glory, and looked down upon the earth as though participating in its gladness; and the clear blue sky was tranquil as the sea sleeping beneath the moon. Many visitors had again assembled at Marchlaw. The sons of Mr. Elliot, and the young men of the party, were assembled upon a level green near the house, amusing themselves with throwing the hammer, and other Border games, while himself and the elder guests stood by as spectators, recounting the deeds of their youth. Johnson,

the sheep-farmer, whom we have already mentioned, now a brawny and gigantic fellow of two-and-thirty, bore away in every game the palm from all competitors. More than once, as Peter beheld his sons defeated, he felt the spirit of youth glowing in his veins, and, "Oh!" muttered he, in bitterness, "had my Thomas been spared to me, he would hae thrown his heart's bluid after the hammer, before he would hae been beat by e'er a Johnson in the country!"

While he thus soliloquized, and with difficulty restrained an impulse to compete with the victor himself, a dark, foreign-looking, strong-built seaman, unceremoniously approached, and, with his arms folded, cast a look of contempt upon the boasting conqueror. Every eye was turned with a scrutinizing glance upon the stranger. In height he could not exceed five feet nine, but his whole frame was the model of muscular strength; his features open and manly, but deeply sunburnt and weather-beaten; his long, glossy, black hair, curled into ringlets by the breeze and the billow, fell thickly over his temples and forehead; and whiskers of a similar hue, more conspicuous for size than elegance, gave a character of fierceness to a countenance otherwise possessing a striking impress of manly beauty. Without asking permission, he stepped forward, lifted the hammer, and, swinging it around his head, hurled it upwards of five yards beyond Johnson's most successful throw. "Well done!" shouted the astonished spectators. The heart of Peter Elliot warmed within him, and he was hurrying forward to grasp the stranger by the hand, when the words groaned in his throat, "It was just such a throw as my Thomas would have made!—my own lost Thomas!" The tears burst into his eyes, and, without speaking, he turned back, and hurried towards the house to conceal his emotion.

Successively, at every game, the stranger had defeated

all who ventured to oppose him, when a messenger announced that dinner waited their arrival. Some of the guests were already seated, others entering; and, as heretofore, placed beside Mrs. Elliot was Elizabeth Bell, still in the noontide of her beauty; but sorrow had passed over her features, like a veil before the countenance of an angel. Johnson, crest-fallen and out of humour at his defeat, seated himself by her side. In early life he had regarded Thomas Elliot as a rival for her affections; and, stimulated by the knowledge that Adam Bell would be able to bestow several thousands upon his daughter for a dowry, he yet prosecuted his attentions with unabated assiduity, in despite of the daughter's aversion and the coldness of her father. Peter had taken his place at the table; and still by his side, unoccupied and sacred, appeared the vacant chair, the chair of his first-born, whereon none had sat since his mysterious death or disappearance.

"Bairns," said he, "did nane o' ye ask the sailor to come up and tak a bit o' dinner wi' us?"

"We were afraid it might lead to a quarrel with Mr. Johnson," whispered one of the sons.

"He is come without asking," replied the stranger, entering; "and the wind shall blow from a new point if I destroy the mirth or happiness of the company."

"Ye're a stranger, young man," said Peter, "or ye would ken this is no a meeting o' mirth-makers. But, I assure ye, ye are welcome, heartily welcome. Haste ye, lasses," he added to the servants; "some o' ye get a chair for the gentleman."

"Gentleman, indeed!" muttered Johnson between his teeth.

"Never mind about a chair, my hearties," said the seaman; "this will do!" And, before Peter could speak to withhold him, he had thrown himself carelessly into the

hallowed, the venerated, the twelve-years-unoccupied chair! The spirit of sacrilege uttering blasphemies from a pulpit could not have smitten a congregation of pious worshippers with deeper horror and consternation, than did this filling of the vacant chair the inhabitants of Marchlaw.

"Excuse me, sir! excuse me, sir!" said Peter, the words trembling upon his tongue; "but ye cannot—ye cannot sit there!"

"O man! man!" cried Mrs. Elliot, "get out o' that! get out o' that!—take my chair!—take ony chair i' the house!—but dinna, dinna sit there! It has never been sat in by mortal being since the death o' my dear bairn!—and to see it filled by another is a thing I canna endure!"

"Sir! sir!" continued the father, "ye have done it through ignorance, and we excuse ye. But that was my Thomas's seat! Twelve years this very day—his birthday—he perished, Heaven kens how! He went out from our sight, like the cloud that passes over the hills—never—never to return. And, O sir, spare a father's feelings! for to see it filled wrings the blood from my heart!"

"Give me your hand, my worthy soul!" exclaimed the seaman; "I revere—nay, hang it! I would die for your feelings! But Tom Elliot was my friend, and I cast anchor in this chair by special commission. I know that a sudden broadside of joy is a bad thing; but, as I don't know how to preach a sermon before telling you, all I have to say is—that Tom an't dead."

"Not dead!" said Peter, grasping the hand of the stranger, and speaking with an eagerness that almost choked his utterance: "O sir! sir! tell me how!—how!—Did ye say, living?—Is my ain Thomas living?"

"Not dead, do ye say?" cried Mrs. Elliot, hurrying towards him and grasping his other hand—"not dead! And shall I see my bairn again? Oh! may the blessing o' Heaven, and the blessing o' a broken-hearted mother

be upon the bearer o' the gracious tidings! But tell me—tell me, how is it possible! As ye would expect happiness here or hereafter, dinna, dinna deceive me!"

"Deceive you!" returned the stranger, grasping, with impassioned earnestness, their hands in his—"Never!—never! and all I can say is—Tom Elliot is alive and hearty."

"No, no!" said Elizabeth, rising from her seat, "he does not deceive us; there is that in his countenance which bespeaks a falsehood impossible." And she also endeavoured to move towards him, when Johnson threw his arm around her to withhold her.

"Hands off, you land-lubber!" exclaimed the seaman, springing towards them, "or, shiver me! I'll show daylight through your timbers in the turning of a handspike!" And, clasping the lovely girl in his arms, "Betty! Betty, my love!" he cried, "don't you know your own Tom? Father, mother, don't you know me? Have you really forgot your own son? If twelve years have made some change on his face, his heart is sound as ever."

His father, his mother, and his brothers, clung around him, weeping, smiling, and mingling a hundred questions together. He threw his arms around the neck of each, and in answer to their inquiries, replied—"Well! well! there is time enough to answer questions, but not to-day—not to-day!"

"No, my bairn," said his mother, "we'll ask you no questions—nobody shall ask you any! But how—how were ye torn away from us, my love? And, O hinny! where—where hae you been?"

"It's a long story, mother," said he, "and would take a week to tell it. But, howsoever, to make a long story short, you remember when the smugglers were pursued, and wished to conceal their brandy in our house, my

father prevented them; they left muttering revenge—and they have been revenged. This day twelve years, I went out with the intention of meeting Elizabeth and her father, when I came upon a party of the gang concealed in Hell's Hole. In a moment half a dozen pistols were held to my breast, and, tying my hands to my sides, they dragged me into the cavern. Here I had not been long their prisoner, when the snow, rolling down the mountains, almost totally blocked up its mouth. On the second night they cut through the snow, and, hurrying me along with them, I was bound to a horse between two, and, before daylight, found myself stowed, like a piece of old junk, in the hold of a smuggling lugger. Within a week I was shipped on board a Dutch man-of-war, and for six years was kept dodging about on different stations, till our old yawning hulk received orders to join the fleet, which was to fight against the gallant Duncan at Camperdown. To think of fighting against my own countrymen, my own flesh and blood, was worse than to be cut to pieces by a cat-o'-nine tails; and, under cover of the smoke of the first broadside, I sprang upon the gunwale, plunged into the sea, and swam for the English fleet. Never, never shall I forget the moment that my feet first trode upon the deck of a British frigate! My nerves felt as firm as her oak, and my heart free as the pennant that waved defiance from her masthead! I was as active as any one during the battle; and when it was over, and I found myself again among my own countrymen, and all speaking my own language, I fancied—nay, hang it! I almost believed—I should meet my father, my mother, or my dear Bess, on board of the British frigate. I expected to see you all again in a few weeks at farthest; but, instead of returning to Old England, before I was aware, I found it was helm about with us. As to writing, I never had an opportunity but once. We were anchored before a French fort; a

packet was lying alongside ready to sail; 'I had half a side written, and was scratching my head to think how I should come over writing about you, Bess, my love, when, as bad luck would have it, our lieutenant comes to me, and says he, 'Elliot,' says he, 'I know you like a little smart service; come, my lad, take the head oar, while we board some of those French bumb-boats under the batteries!' I couldn't say no. We pulled ashore, made a bonfire of one of their craft, and were setting fire to a second, when a deadly shower of small shot from the garrison scuttled our boat, killed our commanding officer with half of the crew, and the few who were left of us were made prisoners. It is of no use bothering you by telling how we escaped from French prison. We did escape; and Tom will once more fill his vacant chair."

Should any of our readers wish farther acquaintance with our friends, all we can say is, the new year was still young when Adam Bell bestowed his daughter's hand upon the heir of Marchlaw, and Peter beheld the once vacant chair again occupied, and a namesake of the third generation prattling on his knee.

THE FAA'S REVENGE.

A TALE OF THE BORDER GIPSIES.

BROWN October was drawing to a close—the breeze had acquired a degree of sharpness too strong to be merely termed bracing—and the fire, as the saying is, was becoming the best flower in the garden—for the hardiest and the latest plants had either shed their leaves, or their flowers had shrivelled at the breath of approaching winter—when a stranger drew his seat towards the parlour fire of the Three-Half-Moons inn, in Rothbury. He had sat for the space of half an hour when a party entered, who, like himself (as appeared from their conversation), were strangers, or rather visitors of the scenery, curiosities, and antiquities in the vicinity. One of them having ordered the waiter to bring each of them a glass of brandy and warm water, without appearing to notice the presence of the first mentioned stranger, after a few remarks on the objects of interest in the neighbourhood, the following conversation took place amongst them:—

"Why," said one, "but even Rothbury here, secluded as it is from the world, and shut out from the daily intercourse of men, is a noted place. It was here that the ancient and famous northern bard and unrivalled ballad writer, Bernard Rumney, was born, bred, and died. Here, too, was born Dr. Brown, who, like Young and Home, united the characters of divine and dramatist, and was the author of '*Barbarossa*,' '*The Cure of Saul*,' and other works, of which posterity and his country are proud. The immediate neighbourhood, also, was the birth-place of the inspired

boy, the heaven-taught mathematician, George Coughran, who knew no rival, and who bade fair to eclipse the glory of Newton, but whom death struck down ere he had reached the years of manhood."

"Why, I can't tell," said another; "I don't know much about what you've been talking of; but I know, for one thing, that Rothbury was a famous place for every sort of games; and, at Fastren's E'en times, the rule was, every male inhabitant above eight years of age to pay a shilling, or out to the foot-ball. It was noted for its game-cocks, too —they were the best breed on the Borders."

"May be so," said the first speaker; "but though I should be loath to see the foot-ball, or any other innocent game which keeps up a manly spirit, put down, yet I do trust that the brutal practice of cock-fighting will be abolished, not only on the Borders, but throughout every country which professes the name of Christian; and I rejoice that the practice is falling into disrepute. But, although my hairs are not yet honoured with the silver tints of age, I am old enough to remember, that, when a boy at school on the Scottish side of the Border, at every Fastren's E'en which you have spoken of, every schoolboy was expected to provide a cock for the battle, or main, and the teacher or his deputy presided as umpire. The same practice prevailed on the southern Border. It is a very old, savage amusement, even in this country; and perhaps the preceptors of youth, in former days, considered it *classical*, and that it would instil into their pupils sentiments of emulation; inasmuch as the practice is said to have taken rise from Themistocles perceiving two cocks tearing at and fighting with each other, while marching his army against the Persians, when he called upon his soldiers to observe them, and remarked that they neither fought for territory, defence of country, nor for glory, but they fought because the one would not yield to, or be defeated by the other; and he

desired his soldiers to take a *moral* lesson from the barn-door fowls. Cock-fighting thus became among the heathen Greeks a political precept and a religious observance—and the *Christian* inhabitants of Britain, disregarding the *religious and political moral*, kept up the practice, adding to it more disgusting barbarity, for *their amusement*."

"Coom," said a third, who, from his tongue, appeared to be a thorough Northumbrian, "we wur talking about Rothbury, but you are goin' to give us a regular sarmin on cock-fighting. Let's hae none o' that. You was saying what clever chaps had been born here—but none o' ye mentioned Jamie Allan, the gipsy and Northumberland piper, who was born here as weel as the best o' them. But I hae heard that Rothbury, as weel as Yetholm and Tweedmouth Moor, was a great resort for the Faa or gipsy gangs in former times. Now, I understand that thae folk were a sort o' bastard Egyptians; and though I am nae scholar, it strikes me forcibly that the meaning o' the word *gipsies*, is just *Egypts*, or *Gypties*—a contraction and corruption o' *Gyptian!*"

"Gipsies," said he who spoke of Rumney and Brown, and abused the practice of cock-fighting, "still do in some degree, and formerly did in great numbers, infest this county; and I will tell you a story concerning them."

"Do so," said the thorough Northumbrian; "I like a story when it's weel put thegither. The gipsies were queer folk. I've heard my faither tell many a funny thing about them, when he used to whistle 'Felton Loanin,' which was made by awd piper Allan—Jamie's faither." And here the speaker struck up a lively air, which, to the stranger by the fire, seemed a sort of parody on the well-known tune of "Johnny Cope."

The other then proceeded with his tale, thus:—

You have all heard of the celebrated Johnny Faa, the Lord and Earl of Little Egypt, who penetrated into Scot-

land in the reign of James IV., and with whom that gallant monarch was glad to conclude a treaty. Johnny was not only the king, but the first of the Faa gang of whom we have mention. I am not aware that gipsies get the name of Faas anywhere but upon the Borders; and though it is difficult to account for the name satisfactorily, it is said to have had its origin from a family of the name of *Fall* or *Fa'*, who resided here (in Rothbury), and that their superiority in their cunning and desperate profession, gave the same cognomen to all and sundry who followed the same mode of life upon the Borders. One thing is certain, that the name *Faa* not only was given to individuals whose surname might be *Fall*, but to the *Winters* and *Clarkes—id genus omne* —gipsy families well known on the Borders. Since waste lands, which were their hiding-places and resorts, began to be cultivated, and especially since the sun of knowledge snuffed out the taper of superstition and credulity, most of them are beginning to form a part of society, to learn trades of industry, and live with men. Those who still prefer their fathers' vagabond mode of life—finding that, in the northern counties, their old trade of fortune-telling is at a discount, and that thieving has thinned their tribe and is dangerous—now follow the more useful and respectable callings of muggers, besom-makers, and tinkers. I do not know whether, in etiquette, I ought to give precedence to the besom-maker or tinker; though, as compared with them, I should certainly suppose that the "muggers" of the present day belong to the Faa aristocracy; if it be not that they, like others, derive their nobility from descent of blood rather than weight of pocket —and that, after all, the mugger with his encampment, his caravans, horses, crystal, and crockery, is but a mere wealthy plebeian or *bourgeois* in the vagrant community. —But to my tale.

On a dark and tempestuous night in the December of

1628, a Faa gang requested shelter in the out-houses of the laird of Clennel. The laird himself had retired to rest; and his domestics being fewer in number than the Faas, feared to refuse them their request.

"Ye shall have up-putting for the night, good neighbours," said Andrew Smith, who was a sort of major-domo in the laird's household, and he spoke in a tone of mingled authority and terror. "But, sir," added he, addressing the chief of the tribe—"I will trust to your honour that ye will allow none o' your folk to be making free with the kye, or the sheep, or the poultry—that is, that ye will not allow them to mistake ony o' them for your own, lest it bring me into trouble. For the laird has been in a fearful rage at some o' your people lately; and if onything were to be amissing in the morning, or he kenned that ye had been here, it might be as meikle as my life is worth."

"Tush, man!" said Willie Faa, the king of the tribe, "ye dree the death ye'll never die. Willie Faa and his folk maun live as weel as the laird o' Clennel. But, there's my thumb, not a four-footed thing, nor the feather o' a bird, shall be touched by me or mine. But I see the light is out in the laird's chamber window—he is asleep and high up amang the turrets—and wherefore should ye set human bodies in byres and stables in a night like this, when your Ha' fire is bleezing bonnily, and there is room enough around it for us a'? Gie us a seat by the cheek o' your hearth, and ye shall be nae loser; and I promise ye that we shall be off, bag and baggage, before the skreigh o' day, or the laird kens where his head lies."

Andrew would fain have refused this request, but he knew that it amounted to a command; and, moreover, while he had been speaking with the chief of the tribe, the maid-servants of the household, who had followed him and the other men-servants to the door, had divers of them been solicited by the females of the gang to have futurity

revealed to them. And whether it indeed be that curiosity is more powerful in woman than in man (as it is generally said to be), I do not profess to determine; but certain it is, that the laird of Clennel's maid-servants, immediately on the hint being given by the gipsies, felt a very ardent desire to have a page or two from the sybilline leaves read to them—at least that part of them which related to their future husbands, and the time when they should obtain them. Therefore, they backed the petition or command of King Willie, and said to Andrew—

"Really, Mr. Smith, it would be very unchristian-like to put poor wandering folk into cauld out-houses on a night like this; and, as Willie says, there is room enough in the Ha'."

"That may be a' very true, lasses," returned Andrew, "but only ye think what a dirdum there would be if the laird were to waken or get wit o't!"

"Fearna the laird," said Elspeth, the wife of King Willie —"I will lay a spell on him that he canna be roused frae sleep, till I, at sunrise, wash my hands in Darden Lough."

The sybil then raised her arms and waved them fantastically in the air, uttering, as she waved them, the following uncouth rhymes by way of incantation—

"Bonny Queen Mab, bonny Queen Mab,
Wave ye your wee bits o' poppy wings
Ower Clennel's laird, that he may sleep
Till I hae washed where Darden springs."

Thus assured, Andrew yielded to his fears and the wishes of his fellow-servants, and ushered the Faas into his master's hall for the night. But scarce had they taken their seats upon the oaken forms around the fire, when—

"Come," said the Faa king, "the night is cold, pinching cold, Mr. Smith: and, while the fire warms without, is there naething in the cellar that will warm within? See to it, Andrew, man—thou art no churl, or thy face is fause."

"Really, sir," replied Andrew—and, in spite of all his efforts to appear at ease, his tongue faultered as he spoke —"I'm not altogether certain what to say upon that subject; for ye observe that our laird is really a very singular man; ye might as weel put your head in the fire there as displease him in the smallest; and though Heaven kens that I would gie to you just as freely as I would tak to mysel, yet ye'll observe that the liquor in the cellars is not mine, but his—and they are never sae weel plenished but I believe he would miss a thimblefu'. But there is some excellent cold beef in the pantry, if ye could put up wi' the like o' it, and the home-brewed which we servants use."

"Andrew," returned the Faa king, proudly—"castle have I none, flocks and herds have I none, neither have I haughs where the wheat, and the oats, and the barley grow—but, like Ishmael, my great forefather, every man's hand is against me, and mine against them—yet, when I am hungry, I never lack the flesh-pots o' my native land, where the moorfowl and the venison make brown broo together. Cauld meat agrees nae wi' my stomach, and servants' drink was never brewed for the lord o' Little Egypt. Ye comprehend me, Andrew?"

"Oh, I daresay I do, sir," said the chief domestic of the house of Clennel; "but only, as I have said, ye will recollect that the drink is not mine to give; and if I venture upon a jug, I hope ye winna think o' asking for another."

"We shall try it," said the royal vagrant.

Andrew, with trembling and reluctance, proceeded to the cellar, and returned with a large earthen vessel filled with the choicest home-brewed, which he placed upon a table in the midst of them.

"Then each took a smack
Of the old black jack,
While the fire burned in the hall."

The Faa king pronounced the liquor to be palatable, and drank to his better acquaintance with the cellars of the laird of Clennel; and his gang followed his example.

Now, I should remark that Willie Faa, the chief of his tribe, was a man of gigantic stature; the colour of his skin was the dingy brown peculiar to his race; his arms were of remarkable length, and his limbs a union of strength and lightness; his raven hair was mingled with grey; while, in his dark eyes, the impetuosity of youth and the cunning of age seemed blended together. It is in vain to speak of his dress, for it was changed daily as his circumstances or avocations directed. He was ever ready to assume all characters, from the courtier down to the mendicant. Like his wife, he was skilled in the reading of no book but the book of fate. Now, Elspeth was a less agreeable personage to look upon than even her husband. The hue of her skin was as dark as his. She was also of his age—a woman of full fifty. She was the tallest female in her tribe; but her stoutness took away from her stature. Her eyes were small and piercing, her nose aquiline, and her upper lip was "bearded like the pard."

While her husband sat at his carousals, and handing the beverage to his followers and the domestics of the house, Elspeth sat examining the lines upon the palms of the hands of the maid-servants—pursuing her calling as a spaewife. And ever as she traced the lines of matrimony, the sybil would pause and exclaim—

"Ha!—money!—money!—cross my loof again, hinny. There is fortune before ye! Let me see! A spur!—a sword!—a shield!—a gowden purse! Heaven bless ye! They are there!—there, as plain as a pikestaff; they are a' in your path. But cross my loof again, hinny, for until siller again cross it, I canna see whether they are to be yours or no."

Thus did Elspeth go on until her "loof had been crossed" by the last coin amongst the domestics of the house of Clen-

nel; and when these were exhausted, their trinkets were demanded and given to assist the spell of the prophetess. Good fortune was prognostieated to the most of them, and especially to those who crossed the loof of the reader of futurity most freely; but to others, perils, and sudden deaths, and disappointments in love, and grief in wedlock, were hinted, though to all and each of these forebodings, a something like hope—an undefined way of escape—was pended.

Now, as the voice of Elspeth rose in solemn tones, and as the mystery of her manner increased, not only were the maid-servants stricken with awe and reverence for the wondrous woman, but the men-servants also began to inquire into their fate. And as they extended their hands, and Elspeth traced the lines of the past upon them, ever and anon she spoke strange words, which intimated secret facts; and she spoke also of love-makings and likings; and ever, as she spoke, she would raise her head and grin a ghastly smile, now at the individual whose hand she was examining, and again at a maid-servant whose fortune she had read; while the former would smile and the latter blush, and their fellow domesties exclaim—

"That's wonderfu'!—that dings a'!—ye are queer folk! —hoo in the world do ye ken?"

Even the curiosity of Mr. Andrew Smith was raised, and his wonder excited; and, after he had quaffed his third cup with the gipsy king, he, too, reverentially approached the bearded princess, extending his hand, and begging to know what futurity had in store for him.

She raised it before her eyes, she rubbed hers over it.

"It is a dark and a difficult hand," muttered she: "here are ships and the sea, and crossing the sea, and great danger, and a way to avoid it—but the gowd!—the gowd that's there! And yet ye may lose it a'! Cross my loof, sir—yours is an ill hand to spae—for it's set wi' fortune, and danger, and adventure."

Andrew gave her all the money in his possession. Now it was understood that she was to return the money and the trinkets with which her loof had been crossed; and Andrew's curiosity overcoming his fears, he ventured to intrust his property in her keeping; for, as he thought, it was not every day that people could have everything that was to happen unto them revealed. But when she had again looked upon his hand—

"It winna do," said she—"I canna see ower the danger ye hae to encounter, the seas ye hae to cross, and the mountains o' gowd that lie before ye yet—ye maun cross my loof again." And when, with a woful countenance, he stated that he had crossed it with his last coin—

"Ye hae a chronometer, man," said she—"it tells you the minutes now, it may enable me to show ye those that are to come!"

Andrew hesitated, and, with doubt and unwillingness, placed the chronometer in her hand.

Elspeth wore a short cloak of faded crimson; and in a sort of pouch in it, every coin, trinket, and other article of value which was put into her hands were deposited, in order, as she stated, to forward her mystic operations. Now, the chronometer had just disappeared in the general receptacle of offerings to the oracle, when heavy footsteps were heard descending the staircase leading to the hall. Poor Andrew, the ruler of the household, gasped—the blood forsook his cheeks, his knees involuntarily knocked one against another, and he stammered out—

"For Heaven's sake, gie me my chronometer!—Oh, gie me it!—we are a' ruined!"

"It canna be returned till the spell's completed," rejoined Elspeth, in a solemn and determined tone—and her countenance betrayed nothing of her dupe's uneasiness; while her husband deliberately placed his right hand upon a sort of dagger which he wore beneath a large coarse jacket that

was loosely flung over his shoulders. The males in his retinue, who were eight in number, followed his example.

In another moment, the laird, with wrath upon his countenance, burst into the hall.

"Andrew Smith," cried he, sternly, and stamping his foot fiercely on the floor, "what scene is this I see? Answer me, ye robber, answer me;—ye shall hang for it!"

"O sir! sir!" groaned Andrew, "mercy!—mercy!—O sir!" and he wrung his hands together and shook exceedingly.

"Ye fause knave!" continued the laird, grasping him by the neck—and dashing him from him, Andrew fell flat upon the floor, and his terror had almost shook him from his feet before—"Speak, ye fause knave!" resumed the laird; "what means your carousin' wi' sic a gang? Ye robber, speak!" And he kicked him with his foot as he lay upon the ground.

"O sir!—mercy, sir!" vociferated Andrew, in the stupor and wildness of terror; "I canna speak!—ye hae killed me outright! I am dead—stone dead! But it wasna my blame—they'll a' say that, if they speak the truth."

"Out! out, ye thieves!—ye gang o' plunderers, born to the gallows!—out o' my house!" added the laird, addressing Willie Faa and his followers.

"Thieves! ye acred loon!" exclaimed the Faa king, starting to his feet, and drawing himself up to his full height—"wha does the worm that burrows in the lands o' Clennel ca' thieves? Thieves, say ye!—speak such words to your equals, but no to me. Your forebears came ower wi' the Norman, invaded the nation, and seized upon land—mine invaded it also, and only laid a tax upon the flocks, the cattle, and the poultry—and wha ca' ye thieves?—or wi' what grace do ye speak the word?"

"Away, ye audacious vagrant!" continued the laird; "ken ye not that the king's authority is in my hands?—and for your former plunderings, if I again find you setting foot upon ground o' mine, on the nearest tree ye shall find a gibbet."

"Boast awa—boast awa, man," said Willie; "ye are safe here, for me and mine winna harm ye; and it is a fougie cock indeed that darena craw in its ain barn-yard. But wait until the day when we may meet upon the wide moor, wi' only twa bits o' steel between us, and see wha shall brag then."

"Away!—instantly away!" exclaimed Clennel, drawing his sword, and waving it threateningly over the head of the gipsy.

"Proud, cauld-hearted, and unfeeling mortal," said Elspeth, "will ye turn fellow-beings from beneath your roof in a night like this, when the fox darena creep frae its hole, and the raven trembles on the tree?"

"Out! out! ye witch!" rejoined the laird.

"Farewell, Clennel," said the Faa king; "we will leave your roof, and seek the shelter o' the hill-side. But ye shall rue! As I speak, man, ye shall rue it!"

"Rue it!" screamed Elspeth, rising—and her small dark eyes flashed with indignation—"he shall rue it—the bairn unborn shall rue it—and the bann o' Elspeth Faa shall be on Clennel and his kin, until his hearth be desolate and his spirit howl within him like the tempest which this night rages in the heavens!"

The servants shrank together into a corner of the hall, to avoid the rage of their master; and they shook the more at the threatening words of the weird woman, lest she should involve them in his doom; but he laughed with scorn at her words.

"Proud, pitiless fool," resumed Elspeth, more bitterly than before, "repress your scorn. Whom, think ye, ye treat wi' contempt? Ken ye not that the humble adder which ye tread upon can destroy ye—that the very wasp can sting ye, and there is poison in its sting? Ye laugh, but for your want of humanity this night, sorrow shall turn your head grey, lang before age sit down upon your brow."

"Off! off! ye wretches!" added the laird; "vent your threats on the wind, if it will hear ye, for I regard them as little as it will. But keep out o' my way for the future, as ye would escape the honours o' a hempen cravat, and the hereditary exaltation o' your race."

Willie Faa made a sign to his followers, and without speaking they instantly rose and departed; but, as he himself reached the door, he turned round, and significantly striking the hilt of his dagger, exclaimed—

"Clennel! ye shall rue it!"

And the hoarse voice of Elspeth without, as the sound was borne away on the storm, was heard crying—"He shall rue it!" and repeating her imprecations.

Until now, poor Andrew Smith had lain groaning upon the floor more dead than alive, though not exactly "stone dead" as he expressed it; and ever, as he heard his master's angry voice, he groaned the more, until in his agony he doubted his existence. When, therefore, on the departure of the Faas, the laird dragged him to his feet, and feeling some pity for his terror, spoke to him more mildly, Andrew gazed vacantly around him, his teeth chattering together, and he first placed his hands upon his sides, to feel whether he was still indeed the identical flesh, blood, and bones of Andrew Smith, or his disembodied spirit; and being assured that he was still a man, he put down his hand to feel for his chronometer, and again he groaned bitterly—and although he now knew he was not dead, he almost wished he were so. The other servants thought also of their money and their trinkets, which, as well as poor Andrew's chronometer, Elspeth, in the hurry in which she was rudely driven from the house, had, by a slip of memory, neglected to return to their lawful owners.

It is unnecessary to dwell upon the laird's anger at his domestics, or farther to describe Andrew's agitation; but I may say that the laird was not wroth against the Faa gang

without reason. They had committed ravages on his flocks —they had carried off the choicest of his oxen—they destroyed his deer—they plundered him of his poultry—and they even made free with the grain that he reared, and which he could spare least of all. But Willie Faa considered every landed proprietor as his enemy, and thought it his duty to quarter on them. Moreover, it was his boisterous laugh, as he pushed round the tankard, which aroused the laird from his slumbers, and broke Elspeth's spell. And the destruction of the charm, by the appearance of their master, before she had washed her hands in Darden Lough, caused those who had parted with their money and trinkets to grieve for them the more, and to doubt the promises of the prophetess, or to

"Take all for gospel that the spaefolk say."

Many weeks, however, had not passed until the laird of Clennel found that Elspeth the gipsy's threat, that he should "*rue it*," meant more than idle words. His cattle sickened and died in their stalls, or the choicest of them disappeared; his favourite horses were found maimed in the mornings, wounded and bleeding in the fields; and, notwithstanding the vigilance of his shepherds, the depredations on his flocks augmented tenfold. He doubted not but that Willie Faa and his tribe were the authors of all the evils which were besetting him: but he knew also their power and their matchless craft, which rendered it almost impossible either to detect or punish them. He had a favourite steed, which had borne him in boyhood, and in battle when he served in foreign wars, and one morning when he went into his park, he found it lying bleeding upon the ground. Grief and indignation strove together in arousing revenge within his bosom. He ordered his sluthhound to be brought, and his dependants to be summoned together, and to bring arms with them. He had previously observed foot-prints on the ground, and he exclaimed—

"Now the fiend take the Faas, they shall find whose turn it is to rue before the sun gae down."

The gong was pealed on the turrets of Clennel Hall, and the kempers with their poles bounded in every direction, with the fleetness of mountain stags, to summon all capable of bearing arms to the presence of the laird. The mandate was readily obeyed; and within two hours thirty armed men appeared in the park. The sluthhound was led to the foot-print; and after following it for many a weary mile over moss, moor, and mountain, it stood and howled, and lashed its lips with its tongue, and again ran as though its prey were at hand, as it approached what might be called a gap in the wilderness between Keyheugh and Clovenerag.

Now, in the space between these desolate crags stood some score of peels, or rather half hovels, half encampments —and this primitive city in the wilderness was the capital of the Faa king's people.

"Now for vengeance!" exclaimed Clennel; and his desire of revenge was excited the more from perceiving several of the choicest of his cattle, which had disappeared, grazing before the doors or holes of the gipsy village.

"Bring whins and heather," he continued—"pile them around it, and burn the den of thieves to the ground."

His order was speedily obeyed, and when he commanded the trumpet to be sounded, that the inmates might defend themselves if they dared, only two or three men and women of extreme age, and some half-dozen children, crawled upon their hands and knees from the huts—for it was impossible to stand upright in them.

The aged men and women howled when they beheld the work of destruction that was in preparation, and the children screamed when they heard them howl. But the laird of Clennel had been injured, and he turned a deaf ear to their misery. A light was struck, and a dozen torches applied at once. The whins crackled, the heather blazed, and

the flames overtopped the hovels which they surrounded, and which within an hour became a heap of smouldering ashes.

Clennel and his dependants returned home, driving the cattle which had been stolen from him before them, and rejoicing in what they had done. On the following day, Willie Faa and a part of his tribe returned to the place of rendezvous—their city and home in the mountains—and they found it a heap of smoking ruins, and the old men and the old women of the tribe—their fathers and their mothers—sitting wailing upon the ruins, and warming over them their shivering limbs, while the children wept around them for food.

"Whose work is this?" inquired Willie, while anxiety and anger flashed in his eyes.

"The Laird o' Clennel!—the Laird o' Clennel!" answered every voice at the same instant.

"By this I swear!" exclaimed the king of the Faas, drawing his dagger from beneath his coat, "from this night henceforth he is laird nor man nae langer." And he turned hastily from the ruins, as if to put his threat in execution.

"Stay, ye madcap!" cried Elspeth, following him, "would ye fling away revenge for half a minute's satisfaction?"

"No, wife," cried he, "nae mair than I would sacrifice living a free and a fu' life for half an hour's hangin'."

"Stop, then," returned she, "and let our vengeance fa' upon him, so that it may wring his life away, drap by drap, until his heart be dry; and grief, shame, and sorrow burn him up, as he has here burned house and home o' Elspeth Faa and her kindred."

"What mean ye, woman?" said Willie, hastily; "if I thought ye would come between me and my revenge, I would drive this bit steel through you wi' as goodwill as I shall drive it through him."

"And ye shall be welcome," said Elspeth. She drew him aside, and whispered a few minutes in his ear. He listened attentively. At times he seemed to start, and at length, sheathing his dagger and grasping her hand, he exclaimed—"Execllent, Elspeth!—ye have it!—ye have it!"

At this period, the laird of Clennel was about thirty years of age, and two years before he had been married to Eleanor de Vere, a lady alike distinguished for her beauty and accomplishments. They had an infant son, who was the delight of his mother, and his father's pride. Now, for two years after the conflagration of their little town, Clennel heard nothing of his old enemies the Faas, neither did they molest him, nor had they been seen in the neighbourhood, and he rejoiced in having cleared his estate of such dangerous visitors. But the Faa king, listening to the advice of his wife, only "nursed his wrath to keep it warm," and retired from the neighbourhood, that he might accomplish, in its proper season, his design of vengeance more effectually, and with greater cruelty.

The infant heir of the house of Clennel had been named Henry, and he was about completing his third year—an age at which children are, perhaps, most interesting, and when their fondling and their prattling sink deepest into a parent's heart—for all is then beheld on childhood's sunny side, and all is innocence and love. Now, it was in a lovely day in April, when every bird had begun its annual song, and flowers were bursting into beauty, buds into leaves, and the earth resuming its green mantle, when Lady Clennel and her infant son, who then, as I have said, was about three years of age, went forth to enjoy the loveliness and the luxuries of nature, in the woods which surrounded their mansion, and Andrew Smith accompanied them as their guide and protector. They had proceeded somewhat more than a mile from the house, and the child, at intervals breaking away from them, sometimes ran before his

mother, and at others sauntered behind her, pulling the wild flowers that strewed their path, when a man, springing from a dark thicket, seized the child in his arms, and again darted into the wood. Lady Clennel screamed aloud, and rushed after him. Andrew, who was coming dreaming behind, got but a glance of the ruffian stranger—but that glance was enough to reveal to him the tall, terrible figure of Willie Faa, the Gipsy king.

There are moments when, and circumstances under which even cowards become courageous, and this was one of those moments and circumstances which suddenly inspired Andrew (who was naturally no hero) with courage. He, indeed, loved the child as though he had been his own; and following the example of Lady Clennel, he drew his sword and rushed into the wood. He possessed considerable speed of foot, and he soon passed the wretched mother, and came in sight of the pursued. The unhappy lady, who ran panting and screaming as she rushed along, unable to keep pace with them, lost all trace of where the robber of her child had fled, and her cries of agony and bereavement rang through the woods.

Andrew, however, though he did not gain ground upon the gipsy, still kept within sight of him, and shouted to him as he ran, saying that all the dependants of Clennel would soon be on horseback at his heels, and trusting that every moment he would drop the child upon the ground. Still Faa flew forward, bearing the boy in his arm, and disregarding the cries and threats of his pursuer. He knew that Andrew's was not what could be called a heart of steel, but he was aware that he had a powerful arm, and could use a sword as well as a better man; and he knew also that cowards will fight as desperately, when their life is at stake, as the brave.

The desperate chase continued for four hours, and till after the sun had set, and the gloaming was falling thick on

the hills. Andrew, being younger and unencumbered, had at length gained ground upon the gipsy, and was within ten yards of him when he reached the Coquet side, about a mile below this town, at the hideous Thrumb, where the deep river, for many yards, rushes through a mere chasm in the rock. The Faa, with the child beneath his arm, leaped across the fearful gulf, and the dark flood gushed between him and his pursuer. He turned round, and, with a horrid laugh, looked towards Andrew and unsheathed his dagger. But even at this moment the unwonted courage of the chief servant of Clennel did not fail him, and as he rushed up and down upon one side of the gulf, that he might spring across and avoid the dagger of the gipsy, the other ran in like manner on the other side; and when Andrew stood as if ready to leap, the Faa king, pointing with his dagger to the dark flood that rolled between them, cried—

"See, fool! eternity divides us!"

"And for that bairn's sake, ye wretch, I'll brave it!" exclaimed Andrew, while his teeth gnashed together; and he stepped back, in order that he might spring across with the greater force and safety.

"Hold man!" cried the Faa; "attempt to cross to me, and I will plunge this bonny heir o' Clennel into the flood below."

"Oh, gracious! gracious!" cried Andrew, and his resolution and courage forsook him; "ye monster!—ye barbarian!—oh, what shall I do now!"

"Go back whence you came," said the gipsy, or follow me another step and the child dies."

"Oh, ye butcher!—ye murderer!" continued the other—and he tore his hair in agony—"hae ye nae mercy?"

"Sic mercy as your maister had," returned the Faa, "when he burned our dwellings about the ears o' the aged and infirm, and o' my helpless bairns! Ye shall find in me

the mercy o' the fasting wolf, o' the tiger when it laps blood!"

Andrew perceived that to rescue the child was now impossible, and with a heavy heart he returned to his master's house, in which there was no sound save that of lamentation.

For many weeks, yea months, the laird of Clennel, his friends and his servants, sought anxiously throughout every part of the country to obtain tidings of his child, but their search was vain. It was long ere his lady was expected to recover the shock, and the affliction sat heavy on his soul, while in his misery he vowed revenge upon all of the gipsy race. But neither Willie Faa nor any of his tribe were again seen upon his estates, or heard of in their neighbourhood.

Four years were passed from the time that their son was stolen from them, and an infant daughter smiled upon the knee of Lady Clennel; and oft as it smiled in her face, and stretched its little hands towards her, she would burst into tears, as the smile and the infantine fondness of her little daughter reminded her of her lost Henry. They had had other children, but they had died while but a few weeks old.

For two years there had been a maiden in the household named Susan, and to her care, when the child was not in her own arms, Lady Clennel intrusted her infant daughter; for every one loved Susan, because of her affectionate nature and docile manners—she was, moreover, an orphan, and they pitied while they loved her. But one evening, when Lady Clennel desired that her daughter might be brought her in order that she might present her to a company who had come to visit them (an excusable, though not always a pleasant vanity in mothers), neither Susan nor the child were to be found. Wild fears seized the bosom of the already bereaved mother, and her husband felt his

heart throb within him. They sought the woods, the hills, the cottages around; they wandered by the sides of the rivers and the mountain burns, but no one had seen, no trace could be discovered of either the girl or the child.

I will not, because I cannot, describe the overwhelming misery of the afflicted parents. Lady Clennel spent her days in tears and her nights in dreams of her children, and her husband sank into a settled melancholy, while his hatred of the Faa race became more implacable, and he burst into frequent exclamations of vengeance against them.

More than fifteen years had passed, and though the poignancy of their grief had abated, yet their sadness was not removed, for they had been able to hear nothing that could throw light upon the fate of their children. About this period, sheep were again missed from the flocks, and, in one night, the hen-roosts were emptied. There needed no other proof that a Faa gang was again in the neighbourhood. Now, Northumberland at that period was still thickly covered with wood, and abounded with places where thieves might conceal themselves in security. Partly from a desire of vengeance, and partly from the hope of being able to extort from some of the tribe information respecting his children, Clennel armed his servants, and taking his hounds with him, set out in quest of the plunderers.

For two days their search was unsuccessful, but on the third the dogs raised their savage cry, and rushed into a thicket in a deep glen amongst the mountains. Clennel and his followers hurried forward, and in a few minutes perceived the fires of the Faa encampment. The hounds had already alarmed the vagrant colony, they had sprung upon many of them and torn their flesh with their tusks; but the Faas defended themselves against them with their poniards, and, before Clennel's approach, more than half his hounds lay dead upon the ground, and his enemies fled.

Yet there was one poor girl amongst them, who had been attacked by a fierce hound, and whom no one attempted to rescue, as she strove to defend herself against it with her bare hands. Her screams for assistance rose louder and more loud; and as Clennel and his followers drew near, and her companions fled, they turned round, and, with a fiendish laugh, cried—

"Rue it now!"

Maddened more keenly by the words, he was following on in pursuit, without rescuing the screaming girl from the teeth of the hound, or seeming to perceive her, when a woman, suddenly turning round from amongst the flying gypsies, exclaimed—

"For your sake!—for Heaven's sake! Laird Clennel! save my bairn!"

He turned hastily aside, and, seizing the hound by the throat, tore it from the lacerated girl, who sank, bleeding, terrified, and exhausted, upon the ground. Her features were beautiful, and her yellow hair contrasted ill with the tawny hue of her countenance and the snowy whiteness of her bosom, which in the struggle had been revealed. The elder gipsy woman approached. She knelt by the side of the wounded girl.

"O my bairn!" she exclaimed, "what has this day brought upon me!—they have murdered you! This is rueing, indeed; and I rue too!"

"Susan!" exclaimed Clennel, as he listened to her words, and his eyes had been for several seconds fixed upon her countenance.

"Yes!—Susan!—guilty Susan!" cried the gipsy.

"Wretch!" he exclaimed, "my child!—where is my child?—is *this*"——and he gazed on the poor girl, his voice failed him, and he burst into tears.

"Yes!—yes!" replied she bitterly, "it is her—there lies your daughter—look upon her face."

He needed, indeed, but to look upon her countenance—disfigured as it was, and dyed with weeds to give it a sallow hue—to behold in it every lineament of her mother's, lovely as when they first met his eye and entered his heart. He flung himself on the ground by her side, he raised her head, he kissed her cheek, he exclaimed, "My child!—my child!—my lost one! I have destroyed thee!"

He bound up her lacerated arms, and applied a flask of wine, which he carried with him, to her lips, and he supported her on his knee, and again kissing her cheek, sobbed, "My child!—my own!"

Andrew Smith also bent over her and said, "Oh, it is her! there isna the smallest doubt o' that. I could swear to her among a thousand. She's her mother's very picture." And, turning to Susan, he added, "O Susan, woman, but ye hae been a terrible hypocrite!"

Clennel having placed his daughter on horseback before him, supporting her with his arm, Susan was set between two of his followers, and conducted to the Hall.

Before the tidings were made known to Lady Clennel, the wounds of her daughter were carefully dressed, the dye that changed the colour of her countenance was removed, and her gipsy garb was exchanged for more seemly apparel.

Clennel anxiously entered the apartment of his lady, to reveal to her the tale of joy; but when he entered, he wist not how to introduce it. He knew that excess of sudden joy was not less dangerous than excess of grief, and his countenance was troubled, though its expression was less sad than it had been for many years.

"Eleanor," he at length began, "cheer up."

"Why, I am not sadder than usual, dear," replied she, in her wonted gentle manner; "and to be more cheerful would ill become one who has endured my sorrows."

"True, true," said he, "but our affliction may not be so severe as we have thought—there may be hope—there may be joy for us yet."

"What mean ye, husband?" inquired she, eagerly; "have ye heard aught—aught of my children?—you have!—you have!—your countenance speaks it."

"Yes, dear Eleanor," returned he, "I have heard of our daughter."

"And she lives?—she lives?—tell me that she lives!"

"Yes, she lives."

"And I shall see her—I shall embrace my child again?"

"Yes, love, yes," replied he, and burst into tears.

"When—oh, when?" she exclaimed, "can you take me to her now?"

"Be calm, my sweet one. You shall see our child—our long-lost child. You shall see her now—she is here."

"Here!—my child!" she exclaimed, and sank back upon her seat.

Words would fail to paint the tender interview—the mother's joy—the daughter's wonder—the long, the passionate embrace—the tears of all—the looks—the words—the moments of unutterable feeling.

I shall next notice the confession of Susan. Clennel promised her forgiveness if she would confess the whole truth; and he doubted not, that from her he would also obtain tidings of his son, and learn where he might find him, if he yet lived. I shall give her story in her own words.

"When I came amongst you," she began, "I said that I was an orphan, and I told ye truly, so far as I knew myself. I have been reared amongst the people ye call gipsies from infancy. They fed me before I could provide for myself. I have wandered with them through many lands. They taught me many things; and, while young, sent me as a

servant into families, that I might gather information to assist them in upholding their mysteries of fortune-telling, I dared not to disobey them—they kept me as their slave—and I knew that they would destroy my life for an act of disobedience. I was in London when ye cruelly burned down the bit town between the Keyheugh and Clovencrag. That night would have been your last, but Elspeth Faa vowed more cruel vengeance than death on you and yours. After our king had carried away your son, I was ordered from London to assist in the plot o' revenge. I at length succeeded in getting into your family, and the rest ye know. When ye were a' busy wi' your company, I slipped into the woods wi' the bairn in my arms, where others were ready to meet us; and long before ye missed us, we were miles across the hills, and frae that day to this your daughter has passed as mine."

"But tell me all, woman," cried Clennel, "as you hope for either pardon or protection—where is my son, my little Harry? Does he live?—where shall I find him?"

"As I live," replied Susan, "I cannot tell. There are but two know concerning him—and that is the king and his wife Elspeth; and there is but one way of discovering anything respecting him, which is by crossing Elspeth's loof, that she may betray her husband: and she would do it for revenge's sake, for an ill husband has he been to her, and in her old days he has discarded her for another."

"And where may she be found?" inquired Clennel, earnestly.

"That," added Susan, "is a question I cannot answer. She was with the people in the glen to-day, and was first to raise the laugh when your dog fastened its teeth in the flesh of your ain bairn. But she may be far to seek and ill to find now—for she is wi' those that travel fast and far, and that will not see her hindmost."

Deep was the disappointment of the laird when he found

he could obtain no tidings of his son. But, at the intercession of his daughter (whose untutored mind her fond mother had begun to instruct), Susan was freely pardoned, promised protection from her tribe, and again admitted as one of the household.

I might describe the anxious care of the fond mother, as, day by day, she sat by her new-found and lovely daughter's side, teaching her, and telling her of a hundred things of which she had never heard before, while her father sat gazing and listening near them, rejoicing over both.

But the ray of sunshine which had penetrated the house of Clennel was not destined to be of long duration. At that period a fearful cloud overhung the whole land, and the fury of civil war seemed about to burst forth.

The threatening storm did explode; a bigoted king overstepped his prerogative, set at nought the rights and the liberties of the subject, and an indignant people stained their hands with blood. A political convulsion shook the empire to its centre. Families and individuals became involved in the general catastrophe; and the house of Clennel did not escape. In common with the majority of the English gentry of that period, Clennel was a stanch loyalist, and if not exactly a lover of the king, or an ardent admirer of his acts, yet one who would fight for the crown though it should (as it was expressed about the time) "hang by a bush." When, therefore, the parliament declared war against the king, and the name of Cromwell spread awe throughout the country, and when some said that a prophet and deliverer had risen amongst them, and others an ambitious hypocrite and a tyrant, Clennel armed a body of his dependants, and hastened to the assistance of his sovereign, leaving his wife and his newly-found daughter with the promise of a speedy return.

It is unnecessary to describe all that he did or encountered during the civil wars. He had been a zealous partizan

of the first Charles, and he fought for the fortunes of his son to the last. He was present at the battle of Worcester, which Cromwell calls his "crowning mercy," in the September of 1651, where the already dispirited royalists were finally routed; and he fought by the side of the king until the streets were heaped with dead; and when Charles fled, he, with others, accompanied him to the borders of Staffordshire.

Having bid the young prince an affectionate farewell, Clennel turned back, with the intention of proceeding on his journey, on the following day, to Northumberland, though he was aware, that, from the part which he had taken in the royal cause, even his person was in danger. Yet the desire again to behold his wife and daughter overcame his fears, and the thought of meeting them in some degree consoled him for the fate of his prince, and the result of the struggle in which he had been engaged.

But he had not proceeded far when he was met by two men dressed as soldiers of the Parliamentary army—the one a veteran with grey hairs, and the other a youth. The shades of night had set in; but the latter he instantly recognized as a young soldier whom he had that day wounded in the streets of Worcester.

"Stand!" said the old man, as they met him; and the younger drew his sword.

"If I stand!" exclaimed Clennel, "it shall not be when an old man and a boy command me." And, following their example, he unsheathed his sword.

"Boy!" exclaimed the youth; "whom call ye boy?—think ye, because ye wounded me this morn, that fortune shall aye sit on your arm?—yield or try."

They made several thrusts at each other, and the old man, as an indifferent spectator, stood looking on. But the youth, by a dexterous blow, shivered the sword in Clennel's hand, and left him at his mercy.

"Now yield ye," he exclaimed; "the chance is mine now—in the morning it was thine."

"Ye seem a fair foe," replied Clennel, "and loath am I to yield, but that I am weaponless."

"Despatch him at once!" growled the old man. "If he spilled your blood in the morning, there can be no harm in spilling his the night—and especially after giein' him a fair chance."

"Father," returned the youth, "would ye have me to kill a man in cold blood?"

"Let him submit to be bound then, hands and eyes, or I will," cried the senior.

The younger obeyed, and Clennel, finding himself disarmed, submitted to his fate; and his hands were bound, and his eyes tied up, so that he knew not where they led him.

After wandering many miles, and having lain upon what appeared the cold earth for a lodging, he was aroused from a comfortless and troubled sleep, by a person tearing the bandage from his eyes, and ordering him to prepare for his trial. He started to his feet. He looked around, and beheld that he stood in the midst of a gipsy encampment. He was not a man given to fear, but a sickness came over his heart when he thought of his wife and daughter, and that, knowing the character of the people in whose power he was, he should never behold them again.

The males of the Faa tribe began to assemble in a sort of half circle in the area of the encampment, and in the midst of them, towering over the heads of all, he immediately distinguished the tall figure of Willie Faa, in whom he also discovered the grey-haired Parliamentary soldier of the previous night. But the youth with whom he had twice contended and once wounded, and by whom he had been made prisoner, he was unable to single out amongst them.

He was rudely dragged before them, and Willie Faa cried—"Ken ye the culprit?"

"Clennel o' Northumberland!—our enemy!" exclaimed twenty voices.

"Yes," continued Willie, "Clennel our enemy—the burner o' our humble habitations—that left the auld, the sick, the infirm, and the helpless, and the infants o' our kindred, to perish in the flaming ruins. Had we burned his house, the punishment would have been death; and shall we do less to him than he would do to us?"

"No! no!" they exclaimed with one voice.

"But," added Willie, "though he would have disgraced us wi' a gallows, as he has been a soldier, I propose that he hae the honour o' a soldier's death, and that Harry Faa be appointed to shoot him."

"All! all! all!" was the cry.

"He shall die with the setting sun," said Willie, and again they cried, "Agreed!"

Such was the form of trial which Clennel underwent, when he was again rudely dragged away, and placed in a tent round which four strong Faas kept guard. He had not been alone an hour, when his judge, the Faa king, entered, and addressed him—

"Now, Laird Clennel, say ye that I haena lived to see day about wi' ye? When ye turned me frae beneath your roof, when the drift was fierce and the wind howled in the moors, was it not tauld to ye that *ye would rue it!*—but ye mocked the admonition and the threat, and, after that, cruelly burned us out o' house and ha'. When I came hame, I saw my auld mother, that was within three years o' a hunder, couring ower the reeking ruins, without a wa' to shelter her, and crooning curses on the doer o' the black deed. There were my youngest bairns, too, crouching by their granny's side, starving wi' hunger as weel as wi' cauld, for ye had burned a', and haudin' their bits o' hands before the burnin' ruins o' the house that they were born in, to warm them! That night I vowed vengeance on you; and even on that night I would have executed it, but I was

prevented; and glad am I now that I was prevented, for my vengeance has been complete—or a' but complete. Wi' my ain hand I snatched your son and heir from his mother's side, and a terrible chase I had for it; but revenge lent me baith strength and speed. And when ye had anither bairn that was like to live, I forced a lassie, that some o' our folk had stolen when an infant, to bring it to us. Ye have got your daughter back again, but no before she has cost ye mony a sad heart and mony a saut tear; and that was some revenge. But the substance o' my satisfaction and revenge lies in what I hae to tell ye. Ye die this night as the sun gaes down; and, hearkèn to me now—the young soldier whom ye wounded on the streets o' Worcester, and who last night made you prisoner, was your son—your heir—your lost son! Ha! ha!—Clennel, am I revenged?"

"My son!" screamed the prisoner—"monster, what is it that ye say? Strike me dead, now I am in your power—but torment me not!"

"Ha! ha! ha!" again laughed the grey-haired savage—"man, ye are about to die, and ye know not ye are born. Ye have not heard half I have to tell. I heard that ye had joined the standard o' King Charles. I, a king in my ain right, care for neither your king nor parliament; but I resolved to wear, for a time, the cloth o' old Noll, and to make your son do the same, that I might hae an opportunity o' meeting you as an enemy, and seeing *him* strike you to the heart. That satisfaction I had not; but I had its equivalent. Yesterday, I saw you shed his blood on the streets o' Worcester, and in the evening he gave you a prisoner into my hands that desired you."

"Grey-haired monster!" exclaimed Clennel. "have ye no feeling—no heart? Speak ye to torment me, or tell me truly, have I seen my son?"

"Patience, man!" said the Faa, with a smile of sardonic triumph—"my story is but half finished. It was the blood o' your son ye shed yesterday at Worcester—it was your

son who disarmed ye, and gave ye into my power; and, best o' a'!—now, hear me! hear me! lose not a word!—it is the hand o' your son that this night, at sunset, shall send you to eternity! Now, tell me, Clennel, am I no revenged? Do ye no rue it?"

"Wretch! wretch!" cried the miserable parent, "in mercy strike me dead. If I have raised my sword against my son, let that suffice ye!—but spare, oh, spare my child from being an involuntary parricide!"

"Hush, fool!" said the Faa; "I have waited for this consummation o' my revenge for twenty years, and think ye that I will be deprived o' it now by a few whining words? Remember, sunset!" he added, and left the tent.

Evening came, and the disk of the sun began to disappear behind the western hills. Men and women, the old and the young, amongst the Faas, came out from their encampment to behold the death of their enemy. Clennel was brought forth between two, his hands fastened to his sides, and a bandage round his mouth, to prevent him making himself known to his executioner. A rope was also brought round his body, and he was tied to the trunk of an old ash tree. The women of the tribe began a sort of yell or coronach; and their king, stepping forward, and smiling savagely in the face of his victim, cried aloud—

"Harry Faa! stand forth and perform the duty your tribe have imposed on you."

A young man, reluctantly, and with a slow and trembling step, issued from one of the tents. He carried a musket in his hand, and placed himself in front of the prisoner, at about twenty yards from him.

"Make ready!" cried Willie Faa, in a voice like thunder. And the youth, though his hands shook, levelled the musket at his victim.

But, at that moment, one who, to appearance, seemed a maniac, sprang from a clump of whins behind the ash tree

where the prisoner was bound, and, throwing herself before him, she cried—"Hold!—would you murder your own father? Harry Clennel!—would you murder your father? Mind ye not when ye was stolen frae your mother's side, as ye gathered wild flowers in the wood?"

It was Elspeth Faa.

The musket dropped from the hands of the intended executioner—a thousand recollections, that he had often fancied dreams, rushed across his memory. He again seized the musket, he rushed forward to his father, but, ere he reached, Elspeth had cut the cords that bound the laird, and placed a dagger in his hand for his defence, and, with extended arms, he flew to meet the youth, crying—"My son!—my son!"

The old Faa king shook with rage and disappointment, and his first impulse was to poniard his wife—but he feared to do so; for although he had injured her, and had not seen her for years, her influence was greater with the tribe than his.

"Now, Willie," cried she, addressing him, "wha rues it now? Fareweel for ance and a'—and the bairn I brought up will find a shelter for my auld head."

It were vain to tell how Clennel and his son wept on each other's neck, and how they exchanged forgiveness. But such was the influence of Elspeth, that they departed from the midst of the Faas unmolested, and she accompanied them.

Imagination must picture the scene when the long-lost son flung himself upon the bosom of his mother, and pressed his sister's hand in his. Clennel Hall rang with the sounds of joy for many days; and, ere they were ended, Andrew Smith placed a ring upon the finger of Susan, and they became one flesh—she a respectable woman. And old Elspeth lived to the age of ninety and seven years beneath its roof.

KATE KENNEDY;

OR, THE MAID OF INNERKEPPLE.

INNERKEPPLE was, some three hundred years ago, as complete a fortification as could be seen along the Borders—presenting its bastions, its turrets and donjon, and all the appurtenances of a military strength, in the face of a Border riever, with that solemn air of defiance that belongs to the style of the old castles. Many a blow of a mangonel it had received; and Scotch and English engines of war had, with equal force and address, poured into its old grey ribs their destructive bolts; every wound was an acquisition of glory; and, unless where a breach demanded a repair for the sake of security, the scars on the old warrior were allowed to remain as a proof of his prowess. Indeed, these very wounds appearing on the walls had their names—being christened after the leaders of the sieges that had been in vain directed against it; and, among the number, the kings of England might have been seen indicated by the futile instruments of vengeance they had flung into the rough ribs of old Innerkepple. But let us proceed. The proprietor, good Walter Kennedy, better known by the appellative of Innerkepple, was not unlike the old strength which he inhabited; being an old, rough, burly baron, on whose face Time had succeeded in making many impressions, notwithstanding of all the opposing energies of a soul that gloried, in all manner of ways, of cheating the old greybeard of his rights and clearing off *his scores*. As a good spirit is said to be like good old wine, getting softer and more balmy

as it increases in age, old Innerkepple proved, by his good humour and jovial manners, the sterling qualities of his heart, which seemed, as he progressed in years, to swell in proportion as that organ in others shrivelled and decreased. He saw nothing in age but the necessity it imposes of having more frequent recourse to its great enemy, the grape; and that power he delighted to bow to, as he bent his head to empty the flagon which his forebear, Kenneth, got from the first King James, as a reward for his services against the house of Albany. Yet the good humour of the old baron was not that of the toper, which, produced by the bowl, would not exist but for its inspiring draught; the feeling of happiness and universal good-will lay at the bottom of the heart itself, and was only swelled into a state of glorious ebullition by the charm of the magic of the vine branch—the true Mercurial *caduceus*, the only true magic wand upon earth.

Though the spirit of antiquarianism is seldom associated with the swelling affections of the heart that is dedicated to Momus, old Innerkepple had, notwithstanding, been able to combine the two qualities or powers. Sitting in his old wainscotted hall, over a goblet of spiced Tokay, there were three old subjects he loved to speculate upon; and these were—his old castle, with its chronicled wounds, where the Genius of War sat alongside of the "auld carle" Time, in grim companionship; secondly, the family tree of the Innerkepples—with himself, a good old branch, kept green by good humour and Tokay, at the further verge; and a small green twig, as slender as a lily stalk, issuing from the old branch—no other than the daughter of Innerkepple, the fair Kate Kennedy, a buxom damsel, of goodly proportions, and as merry, with the aid of health and young sparkling blood, as the old baron was with the spiced wine of Tokay; and, in the third place, there was the true

legitimate study of the antiquary, the ancient wine itself, the mortal years of which he counted with an eye as bright as Cocker's over a triumphant solution. As this last subject grew upon him, he became inspired, like the old poet of Teos, and the rafters of Innerkepple rang to the sound of his voice, tuned to the air of "The Guidwife o' Tullybody," and fraught with the deeds, active and passive, of the barons of Innerkepple and their castle.

The fair Katherine Kennedy inherited her father's good humour, and, maugre all the polishing and freezing influences of high birth, retained her inborn freedom of thought and action, heedless whether the contortion of the *buccæ* in a broad laugh were consistent with the placidity of beauty, or the scream of the heart-excited risibility were in accordance with the formula of high breeding. Buxom in her person, and gay in her manners, she formed the most enchanting baggage of all the care-killing damsels of her day—the most exquisite ronion that ever chased Melancholy from her yellow throne on the face of Hypochondria, or threw the cracker of her persiflage into the midst of the crew of blue devils that bind down care-worn mortals by the bonds of *ennui*. She was no antiquary, even in the limited sense of her father's study of the science of cobwebs; being rather given to *neoterics*, or the science which teaches the qualities of things of to-day or yesterday. Age in all things she hated with a very good feminine spirit of detestation; and, following up her principles, she arrived at the conclusion that youth and beauty were two of the very best qualities that could be possessed by a lover. Her father's impassioned praises of the old branches of the tree of the Innerkepples—comprehending the brave Ludovick, who fell at Homildon, and the memorable Walter, who sold his life at the price of a score of fat Englishmen at the red Flodden—produced only her best and loudest laugh, as she figured to herself the folly

of preferring the rugged trunk to the green branches that suspend at their points the red-cheeked apple full of sweetness and juice. Neither cared the hilarious damsel much for the reverend turrets of Innerkepple. Her father's description, full of good humour as it was, of the various perils they had passed, and the service they had done their country, seemed to her, as she stood on the old walls, listening to the narrative, like the croak of the old corbies that sat on the pinnacles; and her laugh came again full of glee through the loopholes, or echoed from the battered curtain or recesses of the ballium.

That such a person as merry old Innerkepple should have a bitter and relentless foe in the proprietor of the old strength called Otterstone, in the neighbourhood, is one of the most instructive facts connected with the system of war and pillage that prevailed on the Borders, principally during the reign of Henry VIII. of England and James V. of Scotland, when the spirit of religion furnished a cause of aggression that could not have been afforded by the pugnacious temperaments of the victims of attack. Magnus Fotheringham of Otterstone had had a deadly feud with Kenneth Kennedy, the father of the good old Innerkepple, and ever since had nourished against his neighbour a deadly spite, which he had taken many means of gratifying. His opponent had acted merely on the defensive; but his plea had been so well vindicated by his retainers, who loved him with the affection of children, that the splenetic aggressor had been twice repulsed with great slaughter. Most readily would the jovial baron, who had never given any cause of offence, have seized upon the demon of Enmity, and, *obtorto collo*, forced the fiend into the smoking flagon of spiced wine, while he held out the hand of friendship to his hereditary foe; but such was Otterstone's inveteracy, that he would not meet him but with arms in his hands, so that all the endeavours of

the warm-hearted and jolly Innerkepple to overcome the hostility of his neighbour, were looked upon as secret modes of wishing to entrap him, and take vengeance on him for his repeated attacks upon the old castle.

Some short time previous to the period about which we shall become more interested, Innerkepple, with twenty rangers, was riding the marches of his property, when he was set upon by his enemy, who had nearly twice that number of retainers. Taking up with great spirit the plea of their lord, the men who were attacked rallied round the old chief, and fought for him like lions, drowning (perhaps purposely) in the noise of the battle the cries of Innerkepple, who roared, at the top of his voice—

"Otterstone, man—hear me!—A pint o' my auld Canary will do baith you and me mair guid than a' that bluid o' your men and mine. Stop the feeht, man. I hae nae feud against you, an' I'm no answerable for the wrangs o' thy father Kenneth."

These peaceful words were lost amidst the sounds of the battle, and Otterstone construed the contortions of the peacemaker into indications of revenge, and his bawling was set down as his mode of inspiriting his followers. The fight accordingly progressed, old Innerkepple at intervals holding up a white handkerchief as a sign of peace; but which, having been used by him in stopping the wounds of one of his men, was received with its blood-marks as a signal of revenge, both by his men and those of the aggressor. The strife accordingly increased, and all was soon mixed up in the confusion of the melée.

"Has feud ran awa wi' yer senses, Otterstone?" again roared the good old baron. "I'll gie yer son, wha's at St. Omers, the hand o' my dochter Kate. Do you hear me, man? If you will mix the bluids o' oor twa houses, let it be dune by Haly Kirk."

His words never reached Otterstone; but his own men,

who adored and idolized their beautiful young mistress, whose unvaried cheerfulness and kindness had won their hearts, heard the proposition of their master with astonishment and dissatisfaction. They were still sorely pressed by their enemy, who, seeing the stained handkerchief in the hands of Innerkepple, were roused to stronger efforts. At this moment an extraordinary vision met their eyes. A detachment of retainers from the castle came forward in the most regular warlike array, having at their head their young mistress, armed with a helmet and a light jerkin, and bearing in her hand a sword of suitable proportions. A loud shout from the worsted combatants expressed their satisfaction and surprise, and in a moment the assistant corps joined their friends, and commenced to fight. The unusual vision relaxed for a moment the energies of Otterstone's men; but a cry from their chief, that they would that day be ten times vanquished if they were defeated by a female leader, again inspired them, and instigated them to the fight.

"Press forward, brave vassals of Innerkepple!" cried Katherine. "Your foes have no fair damsel to inspire them; and who shall resist those whose arms are nerved in defence of an old chief and a young mistress? He who kills the greatest number of Otterstone's men shall have the privilege of demanding a woman's guerdon from Katherine Kennedy. If this be not enough to make ye fight like lions, ye deserve to be hung in chains on the towers of Otterstone."

Smiling as she uttered her strange speech, she hurried to her father, who was still making all the efforts in his power to bring about a parley. He had got within a few yards of Otterstone, and it required all the energies of Katherine to keep him back and defend him from insidious blows—an office she executed with great agility, by keeping her light sword whirling round her head, and

inflicting wounds—not perhaps of great depth—on those who were ungallant and temerarious enough to approach her parent.

"See, Otterstone, man," cried the laird, still intent on peace, and sorry for the deadly work that was going on around him. "Is she no fit to mak heirs to Otterstone? Up wi' yer helm, Kate, and show him yer fair face. Ha! man, stop this bluidy work, and let us mend a' by a carousal. Deil's in the heart and stamack o' the man that prefers warring to wassailing!"

"He does not hear you, father," cried Kate. "We must defend ourselves. On, brave followers! Ye know your guerdon. Gallant knights have kneeled for it and been refused it. You are to fight for it, and to receive it. Hurrah for Innerkepple!" And she swung her light falchion round her head, while the war-ery of the family, "*Festina lente!*" arose in answer to her inspiriting appeal, and the men rushed forward with new ardour on their foes.

"You are as bluid-thirsty as he is, Kate," cried the baron. "What mean ye, woman? Haste ye up to Otterstone, and fling yer arms round his neck, and greet a guid greet, according to the fashion o' womankind. Awa! haste ye, and say, mairower, that ye'll be the wife o' his son, and join the twa baronies that are gaping for ane anither. Quick, woman; tears are mere water—thin aneuch, Gude kens!—but thae men's bluid is thicker than my vintage o' the year '90."

"Katherine Kennedy never yet wept either to friend or foe, unless in the wild glee of her frolics," replied the maiden. "By the bones of Camilla! I thought I was only fit for sewing battle scenes on satin, and laughing as I killed a knight with my needle; but I find I have the Innerkepple blood in my veins, and my cheek is glowing like a blood-red rose. Take eare of yourself, good father,

and leave the affair to me. A single glance of my eye has more power in it than the command of the proudest baron of the Borders. On, good hearts!" And she again rode among the men, and inspired them with her voice and looks.

The effect of the silvery tones of the voice of Katherine on the hearts of her father's retainers was electric; they fought like lions, and it soon became apparent to Otterstone that a woman is a more dangerous enemy than a man. The cry, "For the fair maid of Innerkepple!" resounded among the combatants, and soon exhibited greater virtue than the war-cry of the house. Against men actuated by the chivalrous feelings that naturally arose out of the defence of a beautiful woman, all resistance was vain; the ranks of Otterstone's men were broken, and this advantage having been seized by their opponents, whose energies were rising every moment, as the sound of Katherine's voice saluted their ears, a route ensued, and the usual consequences of that last resource of the vanquished—flight—were soon apparent in the wounded victims, who fell ingloriously with wounds on their backs. The pursuers were inclined to continue the pursuit even to the walls of Otterstone, but Katherine called them back.

"To slay the flying," said she, with a laugh, as the usual hilarity of her spirits returned upon her, "is what I call effeminate warfare. When men flee, women pursue; and what get they for their pains more than the wench got from Theseus, whom she hunted for his heart, and got, as our hunters do, the kick of his heel? Away, and carry in our disabled, that I may, with woman's art, cure the wounds that have been received in defence of a woman."

The men obeyed with alacrity, and Innerkepple himself stared in amazement at his daughter, who had always before

appeared to him as a wild romp, fit only for killing men with her beauty, or tormenting them with the elfin tricks or bewitching waggeries of her restless salient spirit.

"I'll hae ye in the wainscotted ha', Kate," said the father, as he entered his private chamber, leaning on the arm of his daughter, "painted wi' helm, habergeon, and halberd, and placed alongside o' Lewie o' Homildon and Watt o' Flodden."

"I care not, father," replied Katherine, "if you give the painter instructions to paint me laughing at those famous progenitors of our house, who were foolish enough to give their lives for that glory I can purchase for nothing, and get the lives of my enemies to boot; but I must go and minister to the gallant men who have been wounded."

"Minister first to your father, Kate," replied Innerkepple, with a knowing look.

"And to your father's daughter, you would add," replied she, with a smile. "A bridal and a battle lack wine." And, hastening to a cupboard, she took out and placed on the table a flagon and two cups, the latter of which she filled.

"Rest to the souls of the men I have slain!" said she, laughing, as she lifted the wine cup to her head, while her father was performing the same act.

"What! did ye kill ony o' Otterstone's men?" said Innerkepple.

"Every time I lifted up my visor," replied she, "I scattered death around me. Ha! ha! what fools men are! Their bodies are tenantless; we women are the souls that live outside of them, and take up our residence within their clayey precincts only when we have an object to serve. The tourney has taught me the power of our sex; and there I have thrown my spirit into the man I hated, to gratify my humour by seeing him, poor caitiff! as he caught my hazel eye, writhe and wring, and contort himself into all the attitudes of Proteus."

"Wicked imp!" said Innerkepple, laughing.

"And when he had sufficiently twisted himself," continued she, "I have, with a grave face given the same hazel eye to his opponent, and set his body in motion in the same way. The serpent-charmer is nothing to a woman. By this art, I to-day gained the victory; and I'll stake my auburn toupée against thy grey wig, that I beat, in the same way, the boldest baron of the Borders."

"By the faith o' Innerkepple, ye're no blate, Kate!" said the old baron, still laughing; "but come, let us see our wounded men"—taking his daughter's arm.

"Leave their wounds to me, father," said she. "The sting of the tarantula is cured by an old song. We women are the true leeches; doctors are quacks and medicasters to us. We kill and cure like the Delphic sword, which makes wounds and heals them by alternate strokes."

"Ever at your quips, roisterer," said Innerkepple, as they arrived at the court.

The wounded men had been brought in, and were consigned to the care of one of the retainers, skilled in medicine, Katherine's medicaments—her looks and tones—being reserved for a balsamic application, after the wounds were cicatrized. The other retainers were, meanwhile, busy in consultation, as might have been seen by their congregating into parties, talking low, and throwing looks at Innerkepple and his fair daughter, as they stood on the steps of the inner door of the castle.

"The guerdon! the guerdon!" at last said one of the vassals, advancing and throwing himself at the feet of Kate.

"Ha! ha! I forgot," replied she laughing; "but turn up thy face—art thou the man?"

"So say my companions, fair leddy," replied he. "I brocht doon wi' this arm five o' Otterstone's men."

"With that arm!" replied she, "and what spirit nerved the dead lumber, thinkest thou?"

"Dootless yours, fair leddy," answered he, smiling knowingly; "but, though the spirit was borrowed, I'm no the less entitled to my reward."

"A good stickler for the rights of your sex," answered she, keeping up the humour; "but what guerdon demandest thou?"

"That whilk knights hae sued in vain for at your fair feet," answered the man, smiling, as he uttered nearly the words she had used at the battle.

"Caught in my own snare," replied she, laughing loudly.

"Ah, Kate, Kate!" said the baron, joining in the humour, "hoo mony gallant barons, and knights, and gentlemen hae ye tormented by thae fair lips o' yours, which carry in their cunnin' words a defence o' themsels sae weel contrived that nane daur approach them! Ye're caught at last. 'Stand to yer richts, man. A kiss was promised ye, and by the honour o' Innerkepple, a kiss ye'll hae, if I should haud her head by a grip o' her bonny auburn locks."

"Hold! hold!" cried Katherine; "this matter dependeth on the answer to a question. Art thou married, sirrah?"

The man hesitated, fearful of being caught by his clever adversary

"Have a care o' yoursel, Gregory," said Innerkepple, "ye're on dangerous ground."

"What if I am or am not?" said the man, cautiously, turning up his eye into the face of the wicked querist.

"If thou art not," said she, "then would a kiss of so fair a damsel be to thee beyond the value of a croft of the best land o' the barony o' Innerkepple; but if thou art, then would the guerdon be as nothing to the kiss of thy wife, and as the weight of a feather in the scale against an oxengate of good land."

"I'm no married," replied the man; "but, an't please yer leddyship, I'll take the oxengate."

"Audacious varlet!" cried Kate, rejoicing in the adroit-

ness she exhibited; "wouldst thou prefer a piece of earth to a kiss of Kate Kennedy—a boon which the gayest knights of the Borders have sued for in vain! But 'tis well—thou hast refused the guerdon. Ha! ha! Men of Innerkepple, ye are witnesses to the fact. This man hath spurned my guerdon, and sought dull earth for my rosy lips."

"We are witnesses," cried the retainers; and the court-yard rang with the laugh which the cleverness of their fair mistress had elicited from those who envied Gregory of his privilege.

"Kate, Kate!" said the old baron, joining in the laugh, "will ever mortal be able to seize what are sae weel guarded? I believe ye will be able to argue yer husband oot o' his richts o' proving whether thae little traitors be made of mortal flesh or ripe cherries. But wine is better than women's lips; and since Kate has sae cleverly got quit o' her obligation, I'll mak amends by gieing ye a *surrogatum*."

Several measures of good old wine were served out to the men by the hands of Katherine, who rejoiced in the contradiction of refusing one thing to give a better. Her health, and that of Innerkepple, were drunk with loud shouts of approbation; and the wassail was kept up till a late hour of the night.

Meanwhile, Otterstone was struggling with his disappointment, and nourishing a deep spirit of revenge. The shame of his defeat, accomplished by a girl, was insufferable; and the gnawing pain of the loss of honour and men, in a cause where he had calculated securely on crushing his supposed enemy, affected him so severely, that he sent, it was reported, for his son, who had lived from his infancy at St. Omers, to come over to administer to him consolation. When Innerkepple heard of these things, he marvelled greatly at the stubbornness of his neighbour, whom he wished, above all things, to drag, *nolente volente*, into a deep

wassail in the old wainscotted hall of his castle, whereby he might drown, with reason itself, all their hereditary grudges, and transform a foe into a friend. These feelings were also participated in by the warlike Kate, who acknowledged that she did not, on that memorable day, fight for anything on earth that she knew of, but the safety of her father, and the sheer glory of victory. She entertained the best possible feelings towards Otterstone, though she admitted, with a laugh, that if his men had not that day run for their lives, she would have fought till they and their lord lay all dead upon the field, and the glory of Otterstone was extinguished for ever.

A considerable period that passed in quietness, seemed to indicate that the anger of the vanquished baron had escaped by the valves appointed by nature for freeing the liver of its redundant bile. Meanwhile, Innerkepple's universal love of mankind increased, as his friendship for the juice of the grape grew stronger and stronger, and his potations waxed deeper and deeper; so that he was represented, all over the Borders, as being the most jovial baron of his time. The fame of Kate also went abroad like fire-flaughts; but no one knew what to make of her—whether to set her down as a beautiful virago, or as a merry imp of sportive devilry, who fought her father's enemy with the same good-will she felt towards the lovers whom she delighted with her beauty and gaiety, and tormented by her cruel waggeries and wiles.

This apparent quietness, and the consequent freedom from all danger, induced the old baron to comply with a request made to him by King James, to lend him forty of his followers, to aid in suppressing some disturbances caused by a number of outlawed reivers at that time ravaging the Borders. Katherine gave her consent to the measure; but she wisely exacted the condition that the men should not be removed to a greater distance from the castle than

ten miles. When James' emissary asked her why she adjected this condition to her father's agreement, she answered, with that waggish mystery in which she often loved to indulge, that she had such a universal love for his—the emissary's—sex, that she could not suffer the idea of her gallant men being further removed from her than the distance on which she had condescended. A question for explanation only produced another wicked *quodlibet*; so that the royal messenger was obliged to be contented with a reason that sounded in his ears very like a contempt of royal authority—a circumstance for which she cared no more than she did for the mute expression of admiration of her beauty, that her quick eye detected on the face of the deputy.

The men having been detached from the castle for the service of the king, there remained only a small number, not more than sufficient for occupying the more important stations on the walls of the strength. There was, however, no cause for alarm; and old Innerkepple continued to speculate over his spiced Tokay, on his three grand subjects of antiquarian research; while Katherine followed her various occupations of listening to and laughing at his reveries, sewing battle scenes on satin, and killing her knights with her needle, in as many grotesque ways as her inventive fancy could devise. One day the sound of a horn cut right through the middle a long pull of Canary in the act of being perfected by the old baron's powers of swallow; and, in a short time, the warder came in and said that a wine merchant, with sumpter mules and panniers, was at the end of the drawbridge, and had expressed a strong desire to submit his commodity to the test of such a famous judge of the spirit of the grape as the baron of Innerkepple, whose name had gone forth as transcending that of all modern wine-drinkers.

"A wine merchant!" ejaculated Innerkepple, smacking

his lips after his interrupted draught of vintage '90. "What species o' sma' potation does he deal in? Ha! ha! It suits my humour to see the quack's een reel, as he finds his tongue and palate glued thegither wi' what I ca' wine, and gets them loosed again by his ain coloured water. Show him in, George."

"Whar is my leddy, yer Honour?" said the seneschal, looking bluntly. "Will she consent to the drawbridge bein' raised at a time when the castle's nearly empty?"

"She has just gane into the green parlour in the west tower," said the baron. "But I'll tak Kate in my ain hands. She likes fun as weel as her auld father, and will laugh to see this quack beaten wi' his ain bowls."

The seneschal withdrew, though reluctantly, and casting his eyes about for the indispensable Katherine; but she was not within his reach, and he felt himself compelled, by the impatience of the old baron, to admit the merchant. The creaking hinges of the bridge resounded through the castle, and the merchant and his mules were seen by Katherine, looking through a loophole, slowly making their way into the castle. It was too late for her now to consider of the propriety of the permission to enter; so she leant her chin on her hand, and quietly scanned the stranger, as he crossed the bridge, driving his mules before him with a large stick, which he brought down with a loud thwack on their backs—accompanying his act with a loud "Whoop, ho!" and occasionally throwing his eyes over the walls as he proceeded.

"Whom have we here?" said she, as she communed with herself, and nodded her head, still apparent through the loophole. "By'r Lady! neither Gascon nor Fleming, or my eyes are no better than my father's, when he looks at *antiques* through the red medium of his vintage of '90. Perchance, a lover come to run away with Kate Kennedy. Hey! the thought tickles my wild wits, and sends me on

the wings of fancy into the regions of romance. Yet I have not read that the catching and carrying off of *Tartars* hath anything to do with the themes of romantic love-errantry. I'm witty at the expense of this poor packman; but, seriously, Katherine Kennedy must carry off her lover. True to the difference that opposes me to the rest of my sex, I could not love a man whom I did not vanquish and abduct, as a riever does the chattels of the farmer."

Continuing her gaze, as she laughed at her own strange thoughts, she saw the merchant bind his mules to a ring fixed in the inside of the wall, and take out of his panniers a vessel, with which he proceeded in the direction of the door that led to the hall. When the merchant had disappeared, she saw one of the retainers of the castle examining intently the mules and their panniers. He looked up and caught her eye; and placing his finger on his forehead, made a sign for her to come down. She obeyed with her usual alacrity, and in a moment was at the side of the retainer, who, slipping gently under the shade of the castle, so as to be out of the view of those within the hall, communicated to the ear of Katherine some intelligence of an important nature. The man looked grave; Kate snapped her fingers; the fire of her eyes glanced from the balls like the sparks of struck flint, and the expression of her countenance indicated that she had formed a purpose which she gloried in executing.

"Hark ye, Gregory," said she; "I am still your debtor, but I require again your services." And, looking carefully around her, she whispered some words into the ear of the man; and, upon receiving his nod of intelligence and assent, sprung up the steps that led to the hall.

The wine merchant was, as she entered, sitting at the oaken table, opposite to the old baron, who was holding up in his hand a species of glass jug, and looking through it with that peculiar expression which is only to be found

in the face of a luxurious wine-toper in the act of passing sentence.

"Wha, in God's name, are ye, man?" cried the baron, under the cover of whose speech Kate slipped cleverly up to the window, and sat down, with her cheek resting on her hand, in apparent listlessness, but eyeing intently the stranger. "I could have wad the picture o' my ancestor, Watt o' Flodden, or King Henry's turret, in the east wing o' Innerkepple, wi' its twenty wounds, mair precious than goold, that there wasna a cup o' vintage '90 in Scotland except what I had mysel. Whar got ye't, man? Are ye the Devil? Hae ye brocht it frae my ain cellars? Speak, Satan!"

"Vy, *mon cher* Innerkepple," replied the merchant, "did I not know that you were one grand biberon—I mean drinker of vin? It is known all over the marches—I mean the Bordures. Aha! no one Frenchman could cheat the famous Innerkepple; so I brought the best that was in all my celliers. Is it not grand and magnifique?"

"Grand an' magnifique, man!" replied Innerkepple, as he sipped the wine with the gravity of a judge. "It's mair than a' that, man, if my tongue could coin a word to express its ain sense o' what it is at this moment enjoying. But the organ's stupified wi' sheer delight, and forgets its very mither's tongue; an' nae wonder, for my very een, that didna taste it, reel and get drunk wi' the sight." And the delighted baron took another pull of the goblet.

"Aha! Innerkepple, you are von of the grandest biberons I have ever seen in all this contrée," said the merchant. "It is one great pleasir to trafique vit von so learned in the science of *bon gout*. That grand smack of your lips would tempt me to ruin myself, and drink mine own commodity."

"Hae ye a stock o' the treasure?" said the baron; "I canna suppose it."

"Just five barrils in my celliers at Berwick," answered the merchant, "containing quatre hundred pints de Paris in each one of them."

"I could walk on my bare feet to Berwick to see it and taste it," said the baron; "but what clatter o' a horse's feet is that in the court, Kate?"

"Ha! sure it is my mules," said the Frenchman, starting to his feet in alarm.

"Oh! keep your seat, Monsieur Merchant," cried Kate, laughing and looking out of the window. "Can a lady not despatch her servitor to Selkirk for a pair of sandals, that should this day have been on my feet in place of in Gilbert Skinner's hands, without raising folks from their wine?"

The Frenchman was satisfied, and retook his seat; but the baron looked at Kate, as if at a loss to know what freak had now come into her inventive head. The letting down of the drawbridge, and the sound of the horse's feet passing along the sounding wood, verified her statement, but carried no conviction to the mind of Innerkepple. He had long ceased, however, the vain effort to understand the workings of his daughter's mind, and on the present occasion he was occupied about too important a subject to be interested in the vagaries of a madcap wench.

"By the Virgin!" she said again, "my jennet will lose her own sandals in going for mine, if Gregory thus strikes the rowels into her sides."

Covering, by these words, the rapid departure of the messenger, she turned her eyes to continue the study of the merchant, whom she watched with feline assiduity. The conversation was again resumed.

"Five barrels, said ye, Monsieur?" resumed Innerkepple. "Let me see—that, wi' what I hae mysel, may see me out; but it will be a guid heir-loom to Kate's husband. What is the price?"

"One merk the gallon of four pints de Paris," answered the merchant.

("Yet I see no marks of Otterstone about him," muttered Kate to herself. "How beautiful he is, maugre his disguise! Had he come on a message of love, in place of war, I would have taken him prisoner, and bound him with the rays of light that come from my languishing eyes.")

"That's dear, man," said Innerkepple. "But ye're a cunning rogue; if I keep drinking at this rate, the price will sink as the flavour rises, and ye'll catch me, as men do gudgeons, by the tongue."

"Aha! *mon cher* Innerkepple," said the merchant, "you have von excellent humour of fun about ye. If I vere not *un pauvre merchand*, I would have one grand plaisir in getting *mouille*—I mean drunk—vit you."

("Ha! my treacherous Adonis, art on that tack, with a foul wind in thy fair face?" was Kate's mental ejaculation. "If thou nearest thy haven, I am a worse pilot than Palinurus.")

"Wi' wine like that before ane," responded the baron, "the topers alongside o' ye may be Frenchmen or Dutchmen, warriors or warlocks, wraiths or wassailers, merchants or mahouns—a's alike. It will put a soul into a ghaist, a yearning heart into a gowl, and a spirit o' nobility in the breast o' ane wha never quartered arms but wi' the fair anes o' flesh an' bluid that belang to his wife. I'll be oblivious o' a' warldly things before Kate's sandals come frae Selkirk; but yer price, man, I fear, will stick to me to the end."

"I cannot make one deduction," said the merchant, "but I vill give to the men in the base-court one jolly debauch of very good vin, vich is in my hampers."

("The kaim of chanticleer is in the wind's eye," muttered Katherine. "Thou pointest nobly for the direction

of treachery; but my sandals will be back from Selkirk long before I am obliged to march with thee to the prison of Otterstone.")

"Weel, mak it a merk," said Innerkepple, "for five pints, an' a bouse to my retainers, wha are as muckle beloved by me as if they were my bairns; an' I will close wi' ye."

"Vell, that is one covenant *inter nous*," said the merchant; "but I cannot return to Berwick until *demain*—I mean the morrow; and we vill have the long night for one jolly carousal. I vill go *sans delai*, and give the poor fellows, in the meantime, one leetle tasting of the grand cheer."

("Then I am too long here," muttered Kate. "Alexander told his men that the Persian stream was poisonous, to prevent them from stopping to drink, whereby they would have fallen into the hands of the enemy. One not less than he—ha! ha!—will save her men, by telling them there is treachery in the cup.")

She descended instantly to the base-court, and, passing from one guard to another, she whispered in their ears certain instructions, which, by the nodding of their heads, they seemed to understand, while those she had not time to visit received from their neighbours the communication at second-hand, and thus, in a short space of time, she prepared the whole retainers for the part they were destined to play. She had scarcely finished this part of her operations, and got out of the court, when the wine merchant made his appearance on the steps leading to the hall. He nodded pleasantly to the men, and, proceeding to his mules, took out of one of the panniers a large vessel filled with wine. This he laid on the flagstones of the base-court, and alongside of it he placed a large cup. He then called out to the retainers to approach, and seemed pleased with the readiness with which they complied with his request.

"Mine very good fellows," said he, "I have sold your master, Innerkepple, one grand quantity of vine; and he says I am under one obligation to treat you vit a hamper, for the sake of the grand affection he bears to you. You may drink as much as ever you vill please; and ven this is brought to one termination, I will supply you vit more."

"We're a' under a suitable obligation to ye, sir," replied the oldest of the retainers, a sly, pawky Scotchman—"and winna fail to do credit to the present ye've sae nobly presented to us; but do ye no hear Innerkepple callin' for ye frae the ha'? Awa, sir, to the guid baron, and leave us to our carouse."

"Ay," said another; "we'll inform ye when this is finished."

"Finished!" said a third; "we'll be a' on oor backs before we see the end o't."

"Aha! excellent jolly troup!" cried the merchant, delighted with this company.

The voice of Katherine, who appeared on the steps leading to the hall, now arrested their attention.

"My father is impatient for thee, good merchant," said she.

"*Ma chere* leddy," replied he, "I will be there *a present.*" And, looking up to see that she had again disappeared—"Drink, my jolly mates," he continued. "It is the grand matiere, the *bon* stuff, the excellent good liqueur. Aha! you will be so merry, and you know you have the consent of Innerkepple."

"We'll be a' as drunk as bats," said he who spoke first, with a sly leer.

"The Deil tak him wha has the beddin' o' us!" said another.

"So say I," added half-a-dozen of voices.

"Then I am the Deil's property," said the warder, "un-

less I am saved by the power o' the wine; and, by my faith, I'll no spare't."

"Aha! very good! excellent joke!" cried the delighted merchant. "Drink, and shame the Diable, as we say in France. Wine comes from the gods, and is the grand poison of Beelzebub."

And, after enjoying deep potations, the merchant returned to the hall, amidst the laughter and pretended applause of the men. The moment he had disappeared, Katherine got carried to the spot a measure filled with wine and water; and, having emptied in another vessel the contents of the merchant's hamper, the thin and innocuous potation was poured in to supply its place. The men assisted in the operation; and, all being finished, they began to carouse with great glee and jollity.

"I said, my leddy, to the merchant, that we would be a' as drunk as bats," said one of the humorists; "and sure this is a fair beginning; for wha could stand drink o' this fearfu' strength?"

"The Deil tak him wha has the beddin' o' us!" said the other, laughing, as he drank off a glass of the thin mixture.

"Then I am the Deil's property," said the warder, "unless I am saved by the power o' this strong drink."

And thus the men, encouraged by the smiles of Kate, who was, with great activity, conducting the ceremonies, seemed to be getting boisterous on the strength of the merchant's wine. Their jokes raised real laughter; and the noise of their mirth went up and entered into the hall, falling like incense on the heart of the merchant. Katherine, meanwhile, again betook herself to her station at the hall window, using assiduously both her eyes and ears; the former being directed to a dark fir plantation that stood to the left of the castle, and the latter occupied by the conversations of her father and the merchant.

"My men," said Innerkepple," seem to be following the example o' their master. They are gettin' noisy. I hope, Monsieur, ye were moderate in yer present. A castle-fu' o' drunk men is as bad as a headfu' o' intoxicated notions."

("Hurrah for the French merchant! Long life to him! May he continue as strong as his liquor!")

"Aha! the jolly good fellows are feeling the sting of the spirit," said the merchant, with sparkling eyes.

"Ungratefu' dogs!" rejoined Innerkepple; "I treat them as if they were my sons, and hear hoo they praise a stranger for a bellyfu' o' wine! My beer never produced sae muckle froth o' flattery. But this wine o' yours, Monsieur, drowns a' my indignation."

("Long life to Innerkepple and the fair Katherine!")

"Now you are getting the grand adulation," said the Frenchman. "Ha! they are a jovial troup of good chaps, and deserve one grand potation; but I gave them only one leetle hamper, for fear they should get *mouillé*."

"Very considerate, Monsieur, very prudent and kind," said the baron; "for twa-thirds o' my men are fechtin for Jamie, and we hae a kittle neebor in Otterstone, whase son I hear has come hame frae St. Omers. By-the-by, saw ye the callant in France? They say he's sair ashamed o' the defeat o' his father by the generalship o' my dochter Kate."

"Ha! did *ma chere* leddy combattre Otterstone?" ejaculated the Frenchman, laughing. "Very good! ha! ha! ha! I did not know that, ven I sold him one quantity of vin yesterday; but I assure you, *mon cher* Innerkepple, he is not at all your enemy, and his son did praise *ma chere* leddy as the most magnificent vench in all the contrée."

("Excellently sustained," muttered Katherine to herself. "How I do love the roll of that dark eye, and the curl of

that lip covered with the black moustache! Can so much beauty conceal a deadly purpose? But the 'magnificent vench' shall earn yet a better title to the soubriquet out of thy discomfiture, fair, deceitful, sweet devil.")

"I only wish I had Otterstone whar you are, man," said Innerkepple, "wi' the liquor as sweet an' my bile nae bitterer. I would conquer him in better style than did my dochter, though, I confess, she manœuvred him beautifully."

("Perdition to the faes o' Innerkepple! and, chief o' them, the fause Otterstone, the leddy-licked loon!")

"Helas! The master and the men have the very different creeds," said the Frenchman, shrugging his shoulders; "but my vin is making the *bon* companions choleric. Ha! ha!"

("It is—it is!" muttered Katherine, as she strained her eyes to catch the signal of a white handkerchief, that floated on the top of one of the trees in the fir-wood.)

She now abruptly left the hall, and proceeded to the place in the court occupied by those who were wassailing on the coloured water she had brewed for them with her fair hands. They were busily occupied by the manifestations of their mirth, which was not altogether simulated. A cessation of the noise evinced the effect of her presence among those who deified her.

"Up with the merry strain, my jolly revellers!" said she, smiling, and immediately "Bertram the Archer," in loud notes, rung in the ballium:—

"And Bertram held aloft the horn,
Filled wi' the bluid-red wyne;
And three times has he loudly sworn
His luve he winna tyne.

"My Anne sits on yon eastern tower,
An' greets baith day and night,
An' sorrows for her luver lost,
An' right turned into might.

"'Then hie ye all, my merry men,
To yonder lordly ha'!
An if they winna ope the gate,
We'll scale the burly wa'.'

"'Hurra!' then shouted Bertram's men,
And loudly they hae sworn,
That they will right their gallant knigh
Before the opening morn."*

Under the cover of the noise of the song, which was sung with bacchanalian glee, Katherine communicated her farther instructions to the man who had assumed the principal direction; and, retreating quickly, lest the wine merchant should come out and surprise her, she left the revellers to continue their work. She was soon again at her post at the window. The boon companions within the hall were still busy with their conversation and their wine; and by this time the shades of evening had begun to darken the view from the castle, and envelop the towers in gloom; the rooks had retired to rest, the owls had taken up the screech note which pains the sensitive ear of night, and the bats were beginning to flap their leathern wings on the rough sides of the old walls.

The sounds of the revellers in the court-yard began gradually to die away, and the strains of "Bertram the Archer" were limited to a weak repetition of the last lines, somewhat curtailed of their legitimate syllables:—

"And we will right our gallant knight
Before the opening morn."

These indications of the effect of the wine increased, till, by-and-by, all seemed to be muffled up in silence. The circumstance seemed to be noticed at once by the wine merchant; but he took no notice of it to Innerkepple, whom he still continued to ply with the rich vintage '90.

* Pinkerton gives only one verse of "Bertram the Archer," but Innerkepple's men did not require to be antiquaries.

Kate's senses were all on the alert, and she watched every scene of the acting drama, set agoing by her own master mind. A noise was now heard at the door of the hall, as if some one wished to get in, but could not effect an opening.

"Who's there?" cried Kate, as she proceeded to open the door.

"It's me, your Leddyship's Honour," answered George, the seneschal, as he staggered, apparently in the last stage of drunkenness, into the hall.

"What means this?" cried Innerkepple, rising up, and not very well able to stand himself. "The warder o' my castle in that condition, an' a' our lives dependin' on his prudence!"

"Your Honour's maist forgiving pardon," said the warder. "I am come here, maist lordly Innerkepple"—hiccup—"to inform your Highness that a' the men o' the castle are lying in the base-court like swine. I am the only sober man in the hale menyie"—hic—hic. "But whar's the ferly? The strength o' the Frenchman's wine would have floored the strongest hensure o' the Borders" —hiccup—"an' I would hae been like the rest, if I hadna been the keeper o' the keys o' Innerkepple."

("As well as Roscius, George," muttered Kate, as she, with a smile, contemplated the actor.)

"George, George, man," said the baron, "ye're just as bad as the rest. You've been ower guid to them, Monsieur; but this *mooliness*, as ye ca' it, has a' its dangers in thae times, when castles are surprised an' taen like sleepin' mawkins in bushes o' broom. Awa to yer bed ahint the gratin', man, an' sleep aff the wine, as fast as it is possible for a drunk man to do."

George bowed, and staggered out of the hall, to betake himself to his couch.

"Aha! this is one sad misadventure," said the merchant.

"I did not know there vas half so much strength in this vin. Let us see the jolly topers, mon noble Innerkepple. It is one grand vision to a vendeur of good vin to see the biberons lying on the ground, all *mouillé*. Helas! I was very wrong; but mon noble baron will forgive the grand fault of liberality."

The merchant rose, and, giving his arm to Innerkepple, who had some difficulty in steadying himself, proceeded towards the court, where they saw verified the report of the warder. The men were lying about the yard, apparently in a state of perfect insensibility. The wine measure was empty and overturned; several drinking horns lay scattered around; and everything betokened a deep debauch.

"This maun hae been potent liquor," said the baron, taking up one of the cups, in which a few drops remained, and drinking it. "Ha! man, puir gear after a'. A man micht drink three gallons o't, and dance to the tune o' Gilquhisker after he has finished. What's the meaning o' this?"

"Aha! your tongue is *mouillé*, mon noble Innerkepple," said the merchant.

"It may be sae," replied the baron; "but it wasna made mooly, as ye denominate it, by drink like that. I canna understand it, Monsieur."

As he stood musing on the strange circumstance, he caught, by the light of a torch, the eye of Kate at the window, and felt his bewilderment increased by a leer in that dark bewitching orb, whose language appeared to him often—and never more so than at present—like Greek. His attention was next claimed by the merchant, who proposed that the men should be allowed to sleep out their inebriety where they lay. This proposition was reasonable; and it would, besides, operate as a proper punishment for their exceeding the limits of that prudence which their duty to

their master required them to observe. The baron agreed to it, and, seeking again the support of the Frenchman's arm, he returned to the hall.

The night was now fast closing in. An old female domestic had placed lamps in the hall, and some supper was served up to the baron and the merchant. Kate retired, as she said, to her couch; but it may be surmised that an antechamber received her fair person, where she had something else to do than to sleep. The loud snoring of the men in the court-yard was heard distinctly, mixing with the screams of the owls that perched on the turrets. The two biberons sat down to partake of the supper, and prepare their stomachs, as Innerkepple said, for another bouse of the grand liquor. The conduct of the two carousers now assumed aspects very different from each other. The baron was gradually getting more easy and comfortable, while the merchant displayed an extreme restlessness and anxiety. The praises of his wine fell dead upon his ear, and the jokes of the good Innerkepple seemed to have become vapid and tiresome to him.

"That's a grand chorus in the court-yard, Monsieur," said the baron. "Singing, snoring, groaning, are the three successive acts o' the wassailers. They would have been better engaged eating their supper. Yah! I'm gettin' sleepy, Monsieur."

"Helas! helas!" ejaculated the merchant. "You prick my memory, mon noble Innerkepple. My poor mules! They have got no souper. Ah! cruel master that I am to forget the *pauvre* animals that have got no language to tell their wants."

("So, so—the time approaches," ejaculated Kate, mentally, as she watched behind the door.)

"Pardon me, *mon cher* baron," he continued, "I vill go and give them one leetle feed, and return to you *a present.* I have got beans in my hampers."

"Humanity needs nae pardon, man," replied the baron, nodding with sleep. "Awa and feed the puir creatures; but tak care an' no tramp on an' kill ony o' my brave men in yer effort to save the lives o' yer mules."

"Never fear," said the other, taking from his pocket a small lantern, which he lighted. "Travellers stand in grand need of this machine," he continued. "I will return on the instant."

He now left the baron to his sleep, and crept stealthily along the passage to the door leading to the court. He was followed, unseen, by Katherine, who watched every motion. He felt some difficulty in avoiding the men, who still lay on the ground; but with careful steps he reached the wall, and suddenly sprung on the parapet.

"Prepare!" whispered Katherine into the ears of the prostrate retainers; "the time approaches."

While thus engaged, she kept her eye upon the dark shadow of the merchant, and saw with surprise a blue light flash up from the top of the wall, and throw its ominous glare on the surrounding objects. A scream of the birds on the castle walls announced their wonder at the strange vision, and Katherine concluded that the merchant had thus produced his signal from some phosphorescent mixture, which he had ignited by the aid of the lantern. The light was followed instantly by a shrill blast of a horn. With a bound he reached the floor of the court, and, hastening to the warder's post, threw off the guard of the wheel, and, with all the art and rapidity of a seneschal, prepared for letting down the bridge. All was still as death; there seemed to be no interruption to his proceedings; but he started as he saw the rays of a lamp thrown from a loophole over his head, upon that part of the moat which the bridge covered. He had gone too far to recede; the creaking of the hinges grated, and down came the bridge with a hollow sound. A rush was now heard as of

a body of men pressing forward to take possession of the passage; and tramp, tramp came the sounds of the marching invaders over the hollow-sounding wood. All was still silent within the castle, and the sound of the procession continued. In an instant, a dense, dark body issued from the fir-wood, and rushed with heavy impetuous force on the rear of the corps that were passing into the castle; and, simultaneously with that movement, the whole body of the men within the castle pressed forward to the end of the bridge, and met the front of the intruders, who were thus hedged in by two forces that had taken them by surprise, in both front and rear.

"Caught in our own snare!" cried the voice of old Otterstone.

"Disarm them," sounded shrilly from the lips of Katherine Kennedy.

And a scuffle of wrestling men sent its fearful, death-like sound through the dark ballium. The strife was short and comparatively silent. The men who had rushed from the wood, and who were no other than the absent retainers of Innerkepple, coming from behind, and those within the strength meeting them in front, produced such an alarm in the enclosed troops, that the arms were taken from their hands as if they had been struck with palsy. Every two men seized their prisoner, while some holding burning torches came running forward, to show the revengeful baron the full extent of his shame. Ranged along the court, the spectacle presented by the prisoners was striking and grotesque. Their eyes sought in surprise the form of a female, who, with a sword in one hand and a torch in the other, stood in front of them, as the genius of their misfortune.

The hall door was now opened, where the old baron still sat sound asleep in his chair, unconscious of all these proceedings. The prisoners were led into the spacious

apartment, and ranged along the sides in long ranks. Innerkepple rubbed his eyes, stared, rubbed them again, and seemed lost in perfect bewilderment. All was conducted in dumb show. The proud and revengeful Otterstone was placed alongside of the good baron, his enemy; and Kate smiled as she contemplated the strange looks which the two rivals threw upon each other.

"Right happy am I," said Katherine, coming forward in the midst of the assembly, "to meet my good friends, the noble Otterstone and his men, in my father's hall, under the auspices of a healing friendship. Father, I offer thee the hand of Otterstone. Otterstone, I offer thee the hand of Innerkepple. Ye have long been separated by strife and war, though, on the one side, there was always a good feeling of generous kindliness, opposed to a bitterness that had no cause, and a revenge that knew no excuse. Born nobles and neighbours, educated civilized men, and baptized Christians, why should ye be foes? but, above all, why should the one strike with the sword of war the hand that has held out to him the wine-cup? My father has ever been thy friend, noble Otterstone, and thou hast ever been his foe. How is this? Ah! I know it. Thou wert ignorant, noble guest, of my good father's generous and friendly feelings, and I have taken this opportunity of introducing you to each other, that ye may mutually come to the knowledge of each other's better qualities and intentions."

"What, in the name o' heaven, means a' this, Kate?" ejaculated Innerkepple, in still unsubdued amazement. "Am I dreamin', or am I betrayed? Whar is the wine merchant? Hoo cam ye here, Otterstone? Am I a prisoner in my ain castle, and my ain men and dochter laughing at my misfortune? But ye spoke o' friendship, Kate. Is it possible, Otterstone, ye hae repented o' yer ill-will, and come to mak amends for past grievances?"

"Thou hast heard him, Otterstone," said Kate. "Wilt thou still refuse the hand?"

The chief hesitated; but the good-humoured looks of Innerkepple melted him, and he held out the right hand of good-fellowship to the old baron, who seized it cordially, and shook it heartily.

"Now," said Kate, "we must seal this friendship with a cup of wine. Bring in the wine merchant."

The Frenchman was produced by the warder, along with the remaining hampers of the wine that had been left in the court-yard. As may have been already surmised, he was no other than the son of old Otterstone. Surprised and confounded by all these proceedings, he stood in the midst of the company, looking first at his father, and then at Innerkepple, without forgetting Kate, who stood like a majestic queen, enjoying the triumph of her spirit and ingenuity. Above all things, he wondered at the smile of good humour in the face of his father; and his surprise knew no bounds when he saw every one around as well pleased as if they had been convened for the ends of friendship.

"Hector," said old Otterstone, looking at his son, "the game is up. This maiden has outwitted us, and we are caught in our own snare. Off with thy disguise, and show this noble damsel that thou art worthy of her best smiles."

Hector obeyed, and took off his wig, and the clumsy habiliments that covered his armour, and stood in the midst of the assembly, a young man of exquisite beauty.

"The wine merchant, Hector Fotheringham!" cried Innerkepple. "Ah, Kate, Kate! is this the way ye bring yer lovers to Innerkepple ha'?—in the shape o' a wine merchant—the only form o' the Deevil I wad like to see on this earth? Ha! ye baggage, weel do ye ken hoo to get at the heart o' your faither. But whar was the use o'

secresy, woman? And you, Hector, man, I needed nae bribe o' Tokay to be friendly to the lover o' my dochter. A fine youth—a fine youth. Surely, surely, this man was made for my dochter Kate."

"And thy daughter Kate was made for him," cried Otterstone.

The retainers of both houses shouted applause, and the hall rang with the noise. The wine, which was intended for deception and treachery, was circulated freely, and opened the hearts of the company. Innerkepple was ready again for his Tokay, and, lifting a large goblet to his head—

"To the union o' the twa hooses!" cried he. "And I wish I had twenty dochters, and Otterstone as mony sons, that they micht a' be married thegither; but, on this condition, that the bridegrooms should a' come in the shape o' wine merchants."

"Hurra, hurra!" shouted the retainers. The night was spent in good humour and revelry. All was restored; and, in a short time, the two houses were united by the marriage of Hector Fotheringham and Katherine Kennedy.

RECOLLECTIONS OF FERGUSON.*

CHAPTER I.

"Of Ferguson, the bauld and sleé."—BURNS.

I HAVE, I believe, as little of the egotist in my composition as most men; nor would I deem the story of my life, though by no means unvaried by incident, of interest enough to repay the trouble of either writing or perusing it, were it the story of my own life only; but, though an obscure man myself, I have been singularly fortunate in my friends. The party-coloured tissue of my recollections is strangely interwoven, if I may so speak, with pieces of the domestic history of men whose names have become as familiar to our ears as that of our country itself; and I have been induced to struggle with the delicacy which renders one unwilling to speak much of one's self, and to overcome the dread of exertion natural to a period of life greatly advanced, through a desire of preserving to my countrymen a few notices, which would otherwise be lost to them, of two of their greatest favourites. I could once reckon among my dearest and most familiar friends, Robert Burns and Robert Ferguson.

It is now rather more than sixty years since I studied

* The perusal of this paper, written at an early period by the lamented Hugh Miller, cannot fail to suggest some reflections on the fate of the author himself and that of the poet he describes. It would be simply fanciful to draw from his choice of subject, and the sympathy he manifests for the victim of insanity, any conclusion of a felt affinity of mental type on his part. We would presently get into the obscure subject of presentiments. It is true that Hugh Miller wrote poetry, and was thus subject to the Nemesis; but we insist for no more than a case of coincidence, leaving to psychologists to settle the question of the alleged connection between certain poetical types of mind and eventual madness—cases of which are so plentifully recorded in Germany.—*Ed.*

for a few weeks at the University of St. Andrew's. I was the son of very poor parents, who resided in a seaport town on the western coast of Scotland. My father was a house-carpenter, a quiet, serious man, of industrious habits and great simplicity of character, but miserably depressed in his circumstances, through a sickly habit of body: my mother was a warm-hearted, excellent woman, endowed with no ordinary share of shrewd good sense and sound feeling, and indefatigable in her exertions for my father and the family. I was taught to read at a very early age, by an old woman in the neighbourhood—such a person as Shenstone describes in his "Schoolmistress;" and, being naturally of a reflective turn, I had begun, long ere I had attained my tenth year, to derive almost my sole amusement from books. I read incessantly; and after exhausting the shelves of all the neighbours, and reading every variety of work that fell in my way—from "The Pilgrim's Progress" of Bunyan, and the Gospel Sonnets of Erskine, to a treatise on fortification by Vauban, and the "History of the Heavens" by the Abbé Pluche—I would have pined away for lack of my accustomed exercise, had not a benevolent baronet in the neighbourhood, for whom my father occasionally wrought, taken a fancy to me, and thrown open to my perusal a large and well-selected library. Nor did his kindness terminate until, after having secured to me all of learning that the parish school afforded, he had settled me, now in my seventeenth year, at the University.

Youth is the season of warm friendships and romantic wishes and hopes. We say of the child, in its first attempts to totter along the wall, or when it has first learned to rise beside its mother's knee, that it is yet too weak to stand alone; and we may employ the same language in describing a young and ardent mind. It is, like the child, too weak to stand alone, and anxiously seeks out some kindred mind on which to lean. I had had my intimates at school,

who, though of no very superior cast, had served me, if I may so speak, as resting-places, when wearied with my studies, or when I had exhausted my lighter reading; and now, at St. Andrew's, where I knew no one, I began to experience the unhappiness of an unsatisfied sociality. My schoolfellows were mostly stiff, illiterate lads, who, with a little bad Latin and worse Greek, plumed themselves mightily on their scholarship; and I had little inducement to form any intimacies among them; for, of all men, the ignorant scholar is the least amusing. Among the students of the upper classes, however, there was at least one individual with whom I longed to be acquainted. He was apparently much about my own age, rather below than above the middle size, and rather delicately than robustly formed; but I have rarely seen a more elegant figure or more interesting face. His features were small, and there was what might perhaps be deemed a too feminine delicacy in the whole contour; but there was a broad and very high expansion of forehead, which, even in those days, when we were acquainted with only the phrenology taught by Plato, might be regarded as the index of a capacious and powerful mind; and the brilliant light of his large black eyes, seemed to give earnest of its activity.

"Who, in the name of wonder, is that?" I inquired of a class-fellow, as this interesting-looking young man passed me for the first time.

"A clever, but very unsettled fellow from Edinburgh," replied the lad; "a capital linguist, for he gained our first bursary three years ago; but our Professor says he is certain he will never do any good. He cares nothing for the company of scholars like himself; and employs himself—though he excels, I believe, in English composition—in writing vulgar Scotch rhymes, like Allan Ramsay. His name is Robert Ferguson."

I felt, from this moment, a strong desire to rank among

the friends of one who cared nothing for the company of such men as my class-fellow, and who, though acquainted with the literature of England and Rome, could dwell with interest on the simple poetry of his native country.

There is no place in the neighbourhood of St. Andrew's where a leisure hour may be spent more agreeably than among the ruins of the Cathedral. I was not slow in discovering the eligibilities of the spot; and it soon became one of my favourite haunts. One evening, a few weeks after I had entered on my course at college, I had seated myself among the ruins in a little ivied nook fronting the setting sun, and was deeply engaged with the melancholy Jaques in the forest of Ardennes, when, on hearing a light footstep, I looked up, and saw the Edinburgh student whose appearance had so interested me, not four yards away. He was busied with his pencil and his tablets, and muttering, as he went, in a half audible voice, what, from the inflection of the tones, seemed to be verse. On seeing me, he started, and apologizing, in a few hurried but courteous words, for what he termed the involuntary intrusion, would have passed; but, on my rising and stepping up to him, he stood.

"I am afraid, Mr. Ferguson," I said, "'tis I who owe *you* an apology; the ruins have long been yours, and I am but an intruder. But you must pardon me; I have often heard of them in the west, where they are hallowed, even more than they are here, from their connection with the history of some of our noblest Reformers; and, besides, I see no place in the neighbourhood where Shakspeare can be read to more advantage."

"Ah," said he, taking the volume out of my hand, "a reader of Shakspeare and an admirer of Knox. I question whether the heresiarch and the poet had much in common."

"Nay, now, Mr. Ferguson," I replied, "you are too true a Scot to question that. They had much, very much in

common. Knox was no rude Jack Cade, but a great and powerful-minded man; decidedly as much so as any of the nobler conceptions of the dramatist—his Cæsars, Brutuses, or Othellos. Buchanan could have told you that he had even much of the spirit of the poet in him, and wanted only the art; and just remember how Milton speaks of him in his "Areopagitica." Had the poet of "Paradise Lost" thought regarding him as it has become fashionable to think and speak now, he would hardly have apostrophized him as—*Knox, the reformer of a nation—a great man animated by the spirit of God.*"

"Pardon me," said the young man, "I am little acquainted with the prose writings of Milton; and have, indeed, picked up most of my opinions of Knox at second-hand. But I have read his *merry* account of the murder of Beaton, and found nothing to alter my preconceived notions of him, from either the matter or manner of the narrative. Now that I think of it, however, my opinion of Bacon would be no very adequate one, were it formed solely from the extract of his history of Henry VII., given by Kaimes in his late publication.—Will you not extend your walk?"

We quitted the ruins together, and went sauntering along the shore. There was a rich sunset glow on the water, and the hills that rise on the opposite side of the Frith stretched their undulating line of azure under a gorgeous canopy of crimson and gold. My companion pointed to the scene:—"These glorious clouds," he said, "are but wreaths of vapour; and these lovely hills, accumulations of earth and stone. And it is thus with all the past—with the past of our own little histories, that borrows so much of its golden beauty from the medium through which we survey it—with the past, too, of all history. There is poetry in the remote—the bleak hill seems a darker firmament, and the chill wreath of vapour a river of fire. And you, sir, seem to have contemplated the history of our stern Reformers

through this poetical medium, till you forget that the poetry was not in them, but in that through which you surveyed them."

"Ah, Mr. Ferguson," I replied, "you must permit me to make a distinction. I acquiesce fully in the justice of your remark; the analogy, too, is nice and striking, but I would fain carry it a little further. Every eye can see the beauty of the remote; but there is a beauty in the near—an interest, at least—which every eye cannot see. Each of the thousand little plants that spring up at our feet, has an interest and beauty to the botanist; the mineralogist would find something to engage him in every little stone. And it is thus with the poetry of life—all have a sense of it in the remote and the distant; but it is only the men who stand high in the art—its men of profound science—that can discover it in the near. The *mediocre* poet shares but the commoner gift, and so he seeks his themes in ages or countries far removed from his own; while the man of nobler powers, knowing that all nature is instinct with poetry, seeks and finds it in the men and scenes in his immediate neighbourhood. As to our Reformers"——

"Pardon me," said the young poet; "the remark strikes me, and, ere we lose it in something else, I must furnish you with an illustration. There is an acquaintance of mine, a lad much about my own age, greatly addicted to the study of poetry. He has been making verses all his life-long; he began ere he had learned to write them even; and his judgment has been gradually overgrowing his earlier compositions, as you see the advancing tide rising on the beach and obliterating the prints on the sand. Now, I have observed, that, in all his earlier compositions, he went far from home; he could not attempt a pastoral without first transporting himself to the vales of Arady; or an ode to Pity or Hope, without losing the warm living sentiment in the dead, cold, personifications of the Greek. The Hope

and Pity he addressed were, not the undying attendants of human nature, but the shadowy spectres of a remote age. Now, however, I feel that a change has come over me. I seek for poetry among the fields and cottages of my own land. I—a—a—the friend of whom I speak——But I interrupted your remark on the Reformers."

"Nay," I replied, "if you go on so, I would much rather listen than speak. I only meant to say that the Knoxes and Melvilles of our country have been robbed of the admiration and sympathy of many a kindred spirit, by the strangely erroneous notions that have been abroad regarding them for at least the last two ages. Knox, I am convinced, would have been as great as Jeremy Taylor, had he not been greater."

We sauntered along the shore till the evening had darkened into night, lost in an agreeable interchange of thought. "Ah!" at length exclaimed my companion, "I had almost forgotten my engagement, Mr. Lindsay; but it must not part us. You are a stranger here, and I must introduce you to some of my acquaintance. There are a few of us—choice spirits, of course—who meet every Saturday evening at John Hogg's; and I must just bring you to see them. There may be much less wit than mirth among us; but you will find us all sober when at the gayest; and old John will be quite a study for you."

CHAPTER II.

"Say, ye red gowns that aften here
Hae toasted cakes to Katie's beer,
Gin e'er thir days hae had their peer,
Sae blythe, sae daft!
Ye'll ne'er again in life's career
Sit half sae saft."

Elegy on John Hogg.

We returned to town; and, after threading a few of the narrower lanes, entered by a low door into a long dark room, dimly lighted by a fire. A tall thin woman was employed in skinning a bundle of dried fish at a table in a corner.

"Where's the guidman, Kate?" said my companion, changing the sweet pure English in which he had hitherto spoken for his mother tongue.

"John's ben in the spence," replied the woman. "Little Andrew, the wratch, has been makin' a totum wi' his faither's ae razor, an' the puir man's trying to shave himsel yonder, an' girnan like a sheep's head on the tangs."

"Oh, the wratch! the ill-deedie wratch!" said John, stalking into the room in a towering passion, his face covered with suds and scratches—"I might as weel shave mysel wi' a mussel shillet. Rob Ferguson, man, is that you!"

"Wearie warld, John," said the poet, "for a' oor philosophy."

"Philosophy!—it's but a snare, Rob—just vanity an' vexation o' speerit, as Solomon says. An' isna it clear heterodox besides? Ye study an' study till your brains gang about like a whirligig; an' then, like bairns in a boat that see the land sailin', ye think it's the solid yearth that's turnin' roun'. An' this ye ca' philosophy; as if David

hadna tauld us that the warld sits coshly on the waters, an' canna be moved."

"Hoot, John," rejoined my companion, "it's no me, but Jamie Brown, that differs wi' you on these matters. I'm a Hoggonian, ye ken. The auld Jews were, doubtless, gran' Christians, an' wherefore no guid philosophers too? But it was cruel o' you to unkennel me this mornin' afore six, an' I up sae lang at my studies the nicht afore."

"Ah, Rob, Rob!" said John—"studying in *Tam Dun's* kirk. Ye'll be a minister, like 'a' the lave."

"Mendin' fast, John," rejoined the poet. "I was in your kirk on Sabbath last, hearing worthy Mr. Corkindale; whatever else he may hae to fear, he's in nae danger o' '*thinking his ain thoughts*,' honest man."

"In oor kirk!" said John; "ye're dune, then, wi' precentin' in yer ain—an' troth nae wonder. What could hae possessed ye to gie up the puir chield's name i' the prayer, an' him sittin' at yer lug?"

I was unacquainted with the circumstance to which he alluded, and requested an explanation. "Oh, ye see," said John, "Rob, amang a' the ither gifts that he misguides, has the gift o' a sweet voice; an' naething else would ser' some o' oor Professors than to hae him for their precentor. They micht as weel hae thocht o' an organ—it wad be just as devout; but the soun's everything now, laddie, ye ken, an' the heart naething. Weel, Rob, as ye may think, was less than pleased wi' the job, an' tauld them he could whistle better than sing; but it wasna that they wanted, and sae it behoved him to tak his seat in the box. An' lest the folk should no be pleased wi' ae key to ae tune, he gied them, for the first twa or three days, a hale bunch to each; an' there was never sic singing in St. Andrew's afore. Weel, but for a' that it behoved him still to precent; though he has got rid o' it at last—for what did he do twa Sabbaths agone, but out up drucken Tam Moffat's name in the prayer

—the very chield that was sittin' at his elbow, though the minister couldna see him. An' when the puir stibbler was prayin' for the reprobate as weel's he could, ae half o' the kirk was needcessitated to come oot, that they micht keep decent, an' the ither half to swallow their pocket napkins. But what think ye"——

"Hoot, John, now, leave oot the moral," said the poet. "Here's a' the lads."

Half a dozen young students entered as he spoke; and, after a hearty greeting, and when he had introduced me to them one by one, as a choice fellow of immense reading, the door was barred, and we sat down to half a dozen of home brewed, and a huge platter of dried fish. There was much mirth and no little humour. Ferguson sat at the head of the table, and old John Hogg at the foot. I thought of Eastcheap, and the revels of Prince Henry; but our Falstaff was an old Scotch Seceder, and our Prince a gifted young fellow, who owed all his influence over his fellows to the force of his genius alone.

"Prithee, Hal," I said, "let us drink to Sir John."

"Why, yes," said the poet, "with all my heart. Not quite so fine a fellow, though, 'bating his Scotch honesty. Half Sir John's genius would have served for an epic poet —half his courage for a hero."

"His courage!" exclaimed one of the lads.

"Yes, Willie, his courage, man. Do you think a coward could have run away with half the coolness? With a tithe of the courage necessary for such a retreat, a man would have stood and fought till he died. Sir John must have been a fine fellow in his youth."

"In mony a droll way may a man fa' on the drap drink," remarked John; "an' meikle ill, dootless, does it do in takin' aff the edge o' the speerit—the mair if the edge be a fine razor edge, an' no the edge o' a whittle. I mind about fifty years ago, when I was a slip o' a callant,"——

"Losh, John!" exclaimed one of the lads, "hae ye been feehtin wi' the cats? sic a scrapit face!"

"Wheesht," said Ferguson; "we owe the illustration to that, but dinna interrupt the story."

"Fifty years ago, when I was a slip o' a callant," continued John, "unco curious, an' fond o' kennin everything, as callants will be,"——

"Hoot, John," said one of the students, interrupting him, "can ye no cut short, man? Rob promised last Saturday to gie us, 'Fie, let us a' to the bridal,' an' ye see the ale an' the nicht's baith wearin' dune."

"The song, Rob, the song!" exclaimed half a dozen voices at once; and John's story was lost in the clamour.

"Nay, now," said the good-natured poet, "that's less than kind; the auld man's stories are aye worth the hearing, an' he can relish the auld-warld fisher-sang wi' the best o' ye. But we maun hae the story yet."

He struck up the old Scotch ditty, "Fie let us a' to the bridal," which he sung with great power and brilliancy; for his voice was a richly modulated one, and there was a fulness of meaning imparted to the words which wonderfully heightened the effect. "How strange it is," he remarked to me when he had finished, "that our English neighbours deny us humour! The songs of no country equal our Scotch ones in that quality. Are you acquainted with 'The Guidwife of Auchtermuchty?'"

"Well," I replied; "but so are not the English. It strikes me that, with the exception of Smollet's novels, all our Scotch humour is locked up in our native tongue. No man can employ in works of humour any language of which he is not a thorough master; and few of our Scotch writers, with all their elegance, have attained the necessary command of that colloquial English which Addison and Swift employed when they were merry."

"A braw redd delivery," said John, addressing me. "Are ye gaun to be a minister tae?"

"Not quite sure yet," I replied.

"Ah," rejoined the old man, "'twas better for the Kirk when the minister just made himsel ready for it, an' then waited till he kent whether it wanted him. There's young Rob Ferguson beside you,"—

"Setting oot for the Kirk," said the young poet, interrupting him, "an' yet drinkin' ale on Saturday at e'en wi' old John Hogg."

"Weel, weel, laddie, it's easier for the best o' us to find fault wi' ithers than to mend oorsels. Ye have the head, onyhow; but Jamie Brown tells me it's a doctor ye're gaun to be, after a'."

"Nonsense, John Hogg— I wonder how a man o' your standing"——

"Nonsense, I grant you," said one of the students; "but true enough for a' that, Bob. Ye see, John, Bob an' I were at the King's Muirs last Saturday, an ca'ed at the *pendicle*, in the passing, for a cup o' whey; when the guidwife tellt us there was ane o' the callants, who had broken into the milk-house twa nichts afore, lyin' ill o' a surfeit. 'Dangerous case,' said Bob; 'but let me see him; I have studied to small purpose if I know nothing o' medicine, my good woman.' Weel, the woman was just glad enough to bring him to the bedside; an' no wonder—ye never saw a wiser phiz in your lives—Dr. Dumpie's was naething till't; an', after he had sucked the head o' his stick for ten minutes, an' fand the loon's pulse, an' asked mair questions than the guidwife liked to answer, he prescribed. But, losh! sic a prescription! A day's fasting an' twa ladles o' nettle kail was the gist o't; but then there went mair Latin to the tail o' that, than oor neebor the Doctor ever had to lose."

But I dwell too long on the conversation of this evening. I feel, however, a deep interest in recalling it to memory. The education of Ferguson was of a twofold character—he studied in the schools and among the people; but it was

in the latter tract alone that he acquired the materials of all his better poetry; and I feel as if, for at least one brief evening, I was admitted to the privileges of a class-fellow, and sat with him on the same form. The company broke up a little after ten; and I did not again hear of John Hogg till I read his elegy, about four years after, among the poems of my friend. It is by no means one of the happiest pieces in the volume, nor, it strikes me, highly characteristic; but I have often perused it with an interest very independent of its merits.

CHAPTER III.

"But he is weak—both man and boy
Has been an idler in the land."—WORDSWORTH.

I was attempting to listen, on the evening of the following Sunday, to a dull, listless discourse—one of the discourses so common at this period, in which there was fine writing without genius, and fine religion without Christianity—when a person who had just taken his place beside me, tapped me on the shoulder, and thrust a letter into my hand. It was my newly-acquired friend of the previous evening; and we shook hands heartily under the pew.

"That letter has just been handed me by an acquaintance from your part of the country," he whispered; "I trust it contains nothing unpleasant."

I raised it to the light, and on ascertaining that it was sealed and edged with black, rose and quitted the church, followed by my friend. It intimated, in two brief lines, that my patron, the baronet, had been killed by a fall from his horse a few evenings before; and that, dying intestate, the allowance which had hitherto enabled me to prosecute

my studies necessarily dropped. I crumpled up the paper in my hand.

"You have learned something very unpleasant," said Ferguson. "Pardon me—I have no wish to intrude; but, if at all agreeable, I would fain spend the evening with you."

My heart filled, and grasping his hand, I briefly intimated the purport of the communication, and we walked out together in the direction of the ruins.

"It is, perhaps, as hard, Mr. Ferguson," I said, "to fall from one's hopes as from the place to which they pointed. I was ambitious—too ambitious, it may be—to rise from that level on which man acts the part of a machine, and tasks merely his body, to that higher level on which he performs the proper part of a rational creature, and employs only his mind. But that ambition need influence me no longer. My poor mother, too—I had trusted to be of use to her."

"Ah, my friend," said Ferguson, "I can tell you of a case quite as hopeless as your own—perhaps more so. But it will make you deem my sympathy the result of mere selfishness. In scarce any respect do our circumstances differ.

We had reached the ruins: the evening was calm and mild as when I had walked out on the preceding one; but the hour was earlier, and the sun hung higher over the hill. A newly-formed grave occupied the level spot in front of the little ivied corner.

"Let us seat ourselves here," said my companion, "and I will tell you a story—I am afraid a rather tame one; for there is nothing of adventure in it, and nothing of incident; but it may at least show you that I am not unfitted to be your friend. It is now nearly two years since I lost my father. He was no common man—common neither in intellect nor in sentiment; but though he once fondly hoped

it should be otherwise—for in early youth he indulged in all the dreams of the poet—he now fills a grave as nameless as the one before us. He was a native of Aberdeenshire; but held, latterly, an inferior situation in the office of the British Linen Company in Edinburgh, where I was born. Ever since I remember him, he had awakened too fully to the realities of life, and they pressed too hard on his spirits, to leave him space for the indulgence of his earlier fancies; but he could dream for his children, though not for himself; or, as I should perhaps rather say, his children fell heir to all his more juvenile hopes of fortune, and influence, and space in the world's eye;—and, for himself, he indulged in hopes of a later growth and firmer texture, which pointed from the present scene of things to the future. I have an only brother, my senior by several years, a lad of much energy, both physical and mental; in brief, one of those mixtures of reflection and activity which seem best formed for rising in the world. My father deemed him most fitted for commerce, and had influence enough to get him introduced into the counting-house of a respectable Edinburgh merchant. I was always of a graver turn—in part, perhaps, the effect of less robust health—and me he intended for the Church. I have been a dreamer, Mr. Lindsay, from my earliest years—prone to melancholy, and fond of books and of solitude; and the peculiarities of this temperament the sanguine old man, though no mean judge of character, had mistaken for a serious and reflective disposition. You are acquainted with literature, and know something, from books at least, of the lives of literary men. Judge, then, of his prospect of usefulness in any profession, who has lived, ever since he knew himself, among the poets. My hopes, from my earliest years, have been hopes of celebrity as a writer—not of wealth, or of influence, or of accomplishing any of the thousand aims which furnish the great bulk of mankind with motives. You will laugh at me. There

is something so emphatically shadowy and unreal in the object of this ambition, that even the full attainment of it provokes a smile. For who does not know

> How vain that second life in others' breath,
> The estate which wits inherit after death!'

And what can be more fraught with the ludicrous than a union of this shadowy ambition with *mediocre* parts and attainments! But I digress.

"It is now rather more than three years since I entered the classes here. I competed for a bursary, and was fortunate enough to secure one. Believe me, Mr. Lindsay, I am little ambitious of the fame of mere scholarship, and yet I cannot express to you the triumph of that day. I had seen my poor father labouring, far, far beyond his strength, for my brother and myself—closely engaged during the day with his duties in the bank, and copying at night in a lawyer's office. I had seen, with a throbbing heart, his tall wasted frame becoming tremulous and bent, and the grey hair thinning on his temples; and I now felt that I could ease him of at least part of the burden. In the excitement of the moment, I could hope that I was destined to rise in the world—to gain a name in it, and something more. You know how a slight success grows in importance when we can deem it the earnest of future good fortune. I met, too, with a kind and influential friend in one of the professors, the late Dr. Wilkie. Alas! good, benevolent man! you may see his tomb yonder beside the wall; and, on my return from St. Andrew's, at the close of the session, I found my father on his deathbed. My brother Henry—who had been unfortunate, and, I am afraid, something worse—had quitted the counting-house and entered aboard of a man-of-war as a common sailor; and the poor old man, whose heart had been bound up in him, never held up his head after.

"On the evening of my father's funeral, I could have lain down and died. I never before felt how thoroughly I am unfitted for the world—how totally I want strength. My father, I have said, had intended me for the Church; and, in my progress onward from class to class, and from school to college, I had thought but little of each particular step, as it engaged me for the time, and nothing of the ultimate objects to which it led. All my more vigorous aspirations were directed to a remote future and an unsubstantial shadow. But I had witnessed, beside my father's bed, what had led me seriously to reflect on the ostensible aim for which I lived and studied; and the more carefully I weighed myself in the balance, the more did I find myself awanting. You have heard of Mr. Brown of the Secession, the author of the "Dictionary of the Bible." He was an old acquaintance of my father's; and, on hearing of his illness, had come all the way from Haddington to see him. I felt, for the first time, as kneeling beside his bed, I heard my father's breathings becoming every moment shorter and more difficult, and listened to the prayers of the clergyman, that I had no business in the Church. And thus I still continue to feel. 'Twere an easy matter to produce such things as pass for sermons among us, and to go respectably enough through the mere routine of the profession; but I cannot help feeling that, though I might do all this and more, my duty, as a clergyman, would be still left undone. I want singleness of aim—I want earnestness of heart. I cannot teach men effectually how to live well; I cannot show them, with aught of confidence, how they may die safe. I cannot enter the Church without acting the part of a hypocrite; and the miserable part of the hypocrite it shall never be mine to act. Heaven help me! I am too little a practical moralist myself to attempt teaching morals to others.

"But I must conclude my story, if story it may be called:

—I saw my poor mother and my little sister deprived, by my father's death, of their sole stay, and strove to exert myself in their behalf. In the daytime I copied in a lawyer's office; my nights were spent among the poets. You will deem it the very madness of vanity, Mr. Lindsay; but I could not live without my dreams of literary eminence. I felt that life would be a blank waste without them; and I feel so still. Do not laugh at my weakness, when I say I would rather live in the memory of my country than enjoy her fairest lands—that I dread a nameless grave many times more than the grave itself. But, I am afraid, the life of the literary aspirant is rarely a happy one; and I, alas! am one of the weakest of the class. It is of importance that the means of living be not disjoined from the end for which we live; and I feel that, in my case, the disunion is complete. The wants and evils of life are around me; but the energies through which those should be provided for, and these warded off, are otherwise employed. I am like a man pressing onward through a hot and bloody fight, his breast open to every blow, and tremblingly alive to the sense of injury and the feeling of pain, but totally unprepared either to attack or defend. And then those miserable depressions of spirits to which all men who draw largely on their imagination are so subject; and that wavering irregularity of effort which seems so unavoidably the effect of pursuing a distant and doubtful aim, and which proves so hostile to the formation of every better habit—alas! to a steady morality itself. But I weary you, Mr. Lindsay; besides, my story is told. I am groping onward, I know not whither; and, in a few months hence, when my last session shall have closed, I shall be exactly where you are at present."

He ceased speaking, and there was a pause of several minutes. I felt soothed and gratified. There was a sweet melancholy music in the tones of his voice, that sunk to my

very heart; and the confidence he reposed in me flattered my pride. "How was it," I at length said, "that you were the gayest in the party of last night?"

"I do not know that I can better answer you," he replied, "than by telling you a singular dream which I had about the time of my father's death. I dreamed that I had suddenly quitted the world, and was journeying, by a long and dreary passage, to the place of final punishment. A blue, dismal light glimmered along the lower wall of the vault; and, from the darkness above, where there flickered a thousand undefined shapes—things without form or outline—I could hear deeply-drawn sighs, and long hollow groans and convulsive sobbings, and the prolonged moanings of an unceasing anguish. I was aware, however, though I knew not how, that these were but the expressions of a lesser misery, and that the seats of severer torment were still before me. I went on and on, and the vault widened, and the light increased, and the sounds changed. There were loud laughters and low mutterings, in the tone of ridicule; and shouts of triumph and exultation; and, in brief, all the thousand mingled tones of a gay and joyous revel. Can these, I exclaimed, be the sounds of misery when at the deepest? 'Bethink thee,' said a shadowy form beside me—'bethink thee if it be not so on earth.' And as I remembered that it was so, and bethought me of the mad revels of shipwrecked seamen and of plague-stricken cities, I awoke. But on this subject you must spare me."

"Forgive me," I said; "to-morrow I leave college, and not with the less reluctance that I must part from you. But I shall yet find you occupying a place among the *literati* of our country, and shall remember, with pride, that you were my friend."

He sighed deeply. "My hopes rise and fall with my spirits," he said; "and to-night I am melancholy. Do you ever go to buffets with yourself, Mr. Lindsay? Do you

ever mock, in your sadder moods, the hopes which render you happiest when you are gay? Ah! 'tis bitter warfare when a man contends with Hope!—when he sees her, with little aid from the personifying influence, as a thing distinct from himself—a lying spirit that comes to flatter and deceive him. It is thus I see her to-night.

"See'st thou that grave?—does mortal know
Aught of the dust that lies below?
'Tis foul, 'tis damp, 'tis void of form—
A bed where winds the loathsome worm;
A little heap, mouldering and brown,
Like that on flowerless meadow thrown
By mossy stream, when winter reigns
O'er leafless woods and wasted plains:
And yet that brown, damp, formless heap
Once glowed with feelings keen and deep;
Once eyed the light, once heard each sound
Of earth, air, wave, that murmurs round.
But now, ah! now, the name it bore,
Sex, age, or form, is known no more.
This, this alone, O Hope! I know,
That once the dust that lies below,
Was, like myself, of human race,
And made this world its dwelling-place.
Ah! this, when death has swept away
The myriads of life's present day,
Though bright the visions raised by thee,
Will all my fame, my history be!"

We quitted the ruins and returned to town.

"Have you yet formed," inquired my companion, "any plan for the future?"

"I quit St. Andrew's," I replied, "to-morrow morning. I have an uncle, the master of a West Indiaman, now in the Clyde. Some years ago I had a fancy for the life of a sailor, which has evaporated, however, with many of my other boyish fancies and predilections; but I am strong and active, and it strikes me there is less competition on

sea at present than on land. A man of tolerable steadiness and intelligence has a better chance of rising as a sailor than as a mechanic. I shall set out, therefore, with my uncle on his first voyage."

CHAPTER IV.

"At first, I thought the swankie didna ill—
Again I glowr'd, to hear him better still;
Bauld, slee, an' sweet, his lines mair glorious grew,
Glow'd round the heart, an' glanc'd the soul out through."

ALEXANDER WILSON.

I had seen both the Indies and traversed the wide Pacific, ere I again set foot on the Eastern coast of Scotland. My uncle, the shipmaster, was dead, and I was still a common sailor; but I was light-hearted and skilful in my profession, and as much inclined to hope as ever. Besides, I had begun to doubt, and there cannot be a more consoling doubt when one is unfortunate, whether a man may not enjoy as much happiness in the lower walks of life as in the upper. In one of my later voyages, the vessel in which I sailed had lain for several weeks at Boston in North America—then a scene of those fierce and angry contentions which eventually separated the colonies from the mother country; and when in this place, I had become acquainted, by the merest accident in the world, with the brother of my friend the poet. I was passing through one of the meaner lanes, when I saw my old college friend, as I thought, looking out at me from the window of a crazy wooden building—a sort of fencing academy, much frequented, I was told, by the Federalists of Boston. I crossed the lane in two huge strides.

"Mr. Ferguson," I said—"Mr. Ferguson," for he was withdrawing his head, "do you not remember me?"

"Not quite sure," he replied; "I have met with many sailors in my time; but I must just see."

He had stepped down to the door ere I had discovered my mistake. He was a taller and stronger-looking man than my friend, and his senior apparently by six or eight years; but nothing could be more striking than the resemblance which he bore to him, both in face and figure. I apologized.

"But have you not a brother, a native of Edinburgh," I inquired, "who studied at St. Andrew's about four years ago?—never before, certainly, did I see so remarkable a likeness."

—"As that which I bear to Robert?" he said. "Happy to hear it. Robert is a brother of whom a man may well be proud, and I am glad to resemble him in any way. But you must go in with me, and tell me all you know regarding him. He was a thin pale slip of a boy when I left Scotland—a mighty reader, and fond of sauntering into by-holes and corners; I scarcely knew what to make of him; but he has made much of himself. His name has been blown far and wide within the last two years."

He showed me through a large waste apartment, furnished with a few deal seats, and with here and there a fencing foil leaning against the wall, into a sort of closet at the upper end, separated from the main room by a partition of undressed slabs. There was a charcoal stove in the one corner, and a truckle bed in the other; a few shelves laden with books ran along the wall; there was a small chest raised on a stool immediately below the window, to serve as a writing desk, and another stool standing beside it. A few cooking utensils scattered round the room, and a corner cupboard, completed the entire furniture of the place.

"There is a certain limited number born to be rich, Jack," said my new companion, "and I just don't happen to be among them; but I have one stool for myself, you see, and, now that I have unshipped my desk, another for a visitor, and so get on well enough."

I related briefly the story of my intimacy with his brother; and we were soon on such terms as to be in a fair way of emptying a bottle of rum together.

"You remind me of old times," said my new acquaintance. "I am weary of these illiterate, boisterous, longsided Americans, who talk only of politics and dollars. And yet there are first-rate men among them too. I met, some years since, with a Philadelphia printer, whom I cannot help regarding as one of the ablest, best-informed men I ever conversed with. But there is nothing like general knowledge among the average class; a mighty privilege of conceit, however."

"They are just in that stage," I remarked, "in which it needs all the vigour of an able man to bring his mind into anything like cultivation. There must be many more facilities of improvement ere the mediocritist can develop himself. He is in the egg still in America, and must sleep there till the next age.—But when last heard you of your brother?"

"Why," he replied, "when all the world heard of him—with the last number of *Ruddiman's Magazine*. Where can you have been bottled up from literature of late? Why, man, Robert stands first among our Scotch poets."

"Ah! 'tis long since I have anticipated something like that for him," I said; "but, for the last two years, I have seen only two books, Shakspeare and 'The Spectator.' Pray, do show me some of the magazines."

The magazines were produced; and I heard, for the first time, in a foreign land and from the recitation of the poet's brother, some of the most national and most highly-finished

of his productions. My eyes filled and my heart wandered to Scotland and her cottage homes, as, shutting the book, he repeated to me, in a voice faltering with emotion, stanza after stanza of the "Farmer's Ingle."

"Do you not see it?—do you not see it all?" exclaimed my companion; "the wide smoky room, with the bright turf fire, the blackened rafters shining above, the straw-wrought settle below, the farmer and the farmer's wife, and auld grannie and the bairns. Never was there truer painting; and, oh, how it works on a Scotch heart! But hear this other piece."

He read "Sandy and Willie."

"Far, far ahead of Ramsay," I exclaimed. "More imagination, more spirit, more intellect, and as much truth and nature. Robert has gained his end already. Hurra for poor old Scotland!—these pieces must live for ever. But do repeat to me the 'Farmer's Ingle' once more."

We read, one by one, all the poems in the magazine, dwelling on each stanza, and expatiating on every recollection of home which the images awakened. My companion was, like his brother, a kind, open-hearted man, of superior intellect; much less prone to despondency, however, and of a more equal temperament. Ere we parted, which was not until next morning, he had communicated to me all his plans for the future, and all his fondly cherished hopes of returning to Scotland with wealth enough to be of use to his friends. He seemed to be one of those universal geniuses who do a thousand things well, but want steadiness enough to turn any of them to good account. He showed me a treatise on the use of the sword, which he had just prepared for the press; and a series of letters on the stamp act, which had appeared, from time to time, in one of the Boston newspapers, and in which he had taken part with the Americans.

"I make a good many dollars in these stirring times,"

he said. "All the Yankees seem to be of opinion that they will be best heard across the water when they have got arms in their hands, and have learned how to use them; and I know a little of both the sword and the musket. But the warlike spirit is frightfully thirsty, somehow, and consumes a world of rum; and so I have not yet begun to make rich."

He shared with me his supper and bed for the night; and, after rising in the morning ere I awoke, and writing a long letter for Robert, which he gave me in the hope I might soon meet with him, he accompanied me to the vessel, then on the eve of sailing, and we parted, as it proved, for ever. I know nothing of his after life, or how or where it terminated; but I have learned that, shortly before the death of his gifted brother, his circumstances enabled him to send his mother a small remittance for the use of the family. He was evidently one of the kind-hearted, improvident few, who can share a very little, and whose destiny it is to have only a very little to share.

CHAPTER V.

"O Ferguson! thy glorious parts
Ill suited law's dry, musty arts!
My curse upon your whunstane hearts,
Ye Embrugh gentry!
The tithe o' what ye waste at cartes
Wad stow'd his pantry!"

BURNS.

I visited Edinburgh, for the first time, in the latter part of the autumn of 1773, about two months after I had sailed from Boston. It was on a fine calm morning—one of those clear sunshiny mornings of October, when the gossa-

mer goes sailing about in long cottony threads, so light and fleecy that they seem the skeleton remains of extinct cloudlets; and when the distant hills, with their covering of grey frost rime, seem, through the clear cold atmosphere, as if chiselled in marble. The sun was rising over the town through a deep blood-coloured haze—the smoke of a thousand fires; and the huge fantastic piles of masonry that stretched along the ridge, looked dim and spectral through the cloud, like the ghosts of an army of giants. I felt half a foot taller as I strode on towards the town. It was Edinburgh I was approaching—the scene of so many proud associations to a lover of Scotland; and I was going to meet as an early friend one of the first of Scottish poets. I entered the town. There was a book stall in a corner of the street; and I turned aside for half a minute to glance my eye over the books.

"Ferguson's Poems!" I exclaimed, taking up a little volume. "I was not aware they had appeared in a separate form. How do you sell this?"

"Just like a' the ither booksellers," said the man who kept the stall—"that's nane o' the buiks that come doun in a hurry—just for the marked selling price." I threw down the money.

"Could you tell me anything of the writer?" I said. "I have a letter for him from America."

"Oh, that'll be frae his brither Henry, I'll wad; a clever chield too, but ower fond o' the drap drink, maybe, like Rob himsel'. Baith o' them fine humane chields, though, without a grain o' pride. Rob takes a stan' wi' me sometimes o' half an hour at a time, an' we clatter ower the buiks; an', if I'm no mista'en, yon's him just yonder—the thin, pale slip o' a lad wi' the broad brow. Ay, an' he's just comin' this way."

"Anything new to-day, Thomas?" said the young man, coming up to the stall. "I want a cheap second-hand

copy of Ramsay's 'Evergreen;' and, like a good man as you are, you must just try and find it for me."

Though considerably altered—for he was taller and thinner than when at college, and his complexion had assumed a deep sallow hue—I recognised him at once, and presented him with the letter.

"Ah! from brother Henry," said he, breaking it open, and glancing his eye over the contents. "What—*old college chum, Mr. Lindsay!*" he exclaimed, turning to me. "Yes, sure enough; how happy I am we should have met! Come this way—let us get out of the streets."

We passed hurriedly through the Canongate and along the front of Holyrood-house, and were soon in the King's Park, which seemed this morning as if left to ourselves.

"Dear me, and this is you yourself!—and we have again met, Mr. Lindsay!" said Ferguson; "I thought we were never to meet more. Nothing, for a long time, has made me half so glad. And so you have been a sailor for the last four years. Do let us sit down here in the warm sunshine, beside St. Anthony's Well, and tell me all your story, and how you happened to meet with brother Henry."

We sat down, and I briefly related, at his bidding, all that had befallen me since we had parted at St. Andrew's, and how I was still a common sailor, but, in the main, perhaps, not less happy than many who commanded a fleet.

"Ah, you have been a fortunate fellow," he said; "you have seen much and enjoyed much; and I have been rusting in unhappiness at home. Would that I had gone to sea along with you!"

"Nay, now, that won't do," I replied. "But you are merely taking Bacon's method of blunting the edge of envy. You have scarcely yet attained the years of mature manhood, and yet your name has gone abroad over the

whole length and breadth of the land, and over many other lands besides. I have cried over your poems three thousand miles away, and felt all the prouder of my country for the sake of my friend. And yet you would fain persuade me that you wish the charm reversed, and that you were just such an obscure salt-water man as myself!"

"You remember," said my companion, "the story of the half-man, half-marble prince of the Arabian tale. One part was a living creature, one part a stone; but the parts were incorporated, and the mixture was misery. I am just such a poor unhappy creature as the enchanted prince of the story."

"You surprise and distress me," I rejoined. "Have you not accomplished all you so fondly purposed—realized even your warmest wishes? And this, too, in early life. Your most sanguine hopes pointed but to a name, which you yourself perhaps was never to hear, but which was to dwell on men's tongues when the grave had closed over you. And now the name is gained, and you live to enjoy it. I see the *living* part of your lot, and it seems instinct with happiness; but in what does the *dead*, the stony part, consist?"

He shook his head, and looked up mournfully in my face; there was a pause of a few seconds. "You, Mr. Lindsay," he at length replied, "you who are of an equable steady temperament, can know little, from experience, of the unhappiness of the man who lives only in extremes, who is either madly gay or miserably depressed. Try and realize the feelings of one whose mind is like a broken harp—all the medium tones gone, and only the higher and lower left; of one, too, whose circumstances seem of a piece with his mind, who can enjoy the exercise of his better powers, and yet can only live by the monotonous drudgery of copying page after page in a clerk's office; of one who is continually either groping his way

amid a chill melancholy fog of nervous depression, or carried headlong, by a wild gaiety, to all which his better judgment would instruct him to avoid; of one who, when he indulges most in the pride of superior intellect, cannot away with the thought that that intellect is on the eve of breaking up, and that he must yet rate infinitely lower in the scale of rationality than any of the nameless thousands who carry on the ordinary concerns of life around him."

I was grieved and astonished, and knew not what to answer. "You are in a gloomy mood to-day," I at length said; "you are immersed in one of the fogs you describe; and all the surrounding objects take a tinge of darkness from the medium through which you survey them. Come, now, you must make an exertion, and shake off your melancholy. I have told you all my story, as I best could, and you must tell me all yours in return."

"Well," he replied, "I shall, though it mayn't be the best way in the world of dissipating my melancholy. I think I must have told you, when at college, that I had a maternal uncle of considerable wealth, and, as the world goes, respectability, who resided in Aberdeenshire. He was placed on what one may term the table-land of society; and my poor mother, whose recollections of him were limited to a period when there is warmth in the feelings of the most ordinary minds, had hoped that he would willingly exert his influence in my behalf. Much, doubtless, depends on one's setting out in life; and it would have been something to have been enabled to step into it from a level like that occupied by my relative. I paid him a visit shortly after leaving college, and met with apparent kindness. But I can see beyond the surface, Mr. Lindsay, and I soon saw that my uncle was entirely a different man from the brother whom my mother remembered. He had risen, by a course of slow industry, from comparative poverty, and his feelings had worn out in the process.

The character was case-hardened all over; and the polish it bore—for I have rarely met a smoother man—seemed no improvement. He was, in brief, one of the class content to dwell for ever in mere decencies, with consciences made up of the conventional moralities, who think by precedent, bow to public opinion as their god, and estimate merit by its weight in guineas."

"And so your visit," I said, "was a very brief one?"

"You distress me," he replied. "It should have been so; but it was not. But what could I do? Ever since my father's death I had been taught to consider this man as my natural guardian, and I was now unwilling to part with my last hope. But this is not all. Under much apparent activity, my friend, there is a substratum of apathetical indolence in my disposition: I move rapidly when in motion, but when at rest there is a dull inertness in the character, which the will, when unassisted by passion, is too feeble to overcome. Poor, weak creature that I am! I had sitten down by my uncle's fireside, and felt unwilling to rise. Pity me, my friend—I deserve your pity—but, oh, do not despise me!"

"Forgive me, Mr. Ferguson," I said; "I have given you pain—but surely most unwittingly,"

"I am ever a fool," he continued; "but my story lags; and, surely, there is little in it on which it were pleasure to dwell. I sat at this man's table for six months, and saw, day after day, his manner towards me becoming more constrained and his politeness more cold; and yet I staid on, till at last my clothes were worn threadbare, and he began to feel that the shabbiness of the nephew affected the respectability of the uncle. His friend the soap-boiler, and his friend the oil-merchant, and his friend the manager of the hemp manufactory, with their wives and daughters—all people of high standing in the world—occasionally honoured his table with their presence, and how

could he be other than ashamed of mine? It vexes me that I cannot even yet be cool on the subject—it vexes me that a creature so sordid should have so much the power to move me—but I cannot, I cannot master my feelings. He—he told me—and with whom should the blame rest, but with the weak, spiritless thing who lingered on in mean, bitter dependence, to hear what he had to tell?—he told me that all his friends were respectable, and that my appearance was no longer that of a person whom he could wish to see at his table, or introduce to any one as his nephew. And I had staid to hear all this!

"I can hardly tell you how I got home. I travelled, stage after stage, along the rough dusty roads, with a weak and feverish body, and almost despairing mind. On meeting with my mother, I could have laid my head on her bosom and cried like a child. I took to my bed in a high fever, and trusted that all my troubles were soon to terminate; but, when the die was cast, it turned up life. I resumed my old miserable employments—for what could I else?—and, that I might be less unhappy in the prosecution of them, my old amusements too. I copied during the day in a clerk's office that I might live, and wrote during the night that I might be known. And I have in part, perhaps, attained my object. I have pursued and caught hold of the shadow on which my heart had been so long set; and if it prove empty, and untangible, and unsatisfactory, like every other shadow, the blame surely must rest with the pursuer, not with the thing pursued. I weary you, Mr. Lindsay; but one word more. There are hours when the mind, weakened by exertion, or by the teazing monotony of an employment which tasks without exercising it, can no longer exert its powers, and when, feeling that sociality is a law of our nature, we seek the society of our fellow-men. With a creature so much the sport of impulse as I am, it is of these hours of weakness that

conscience takes most note. God help me! I have been told that life is short; but it stretches on, and on, and on before me; and I know not how it is to be passed through."

My spirits had so sunk during this singular conversation, that I had no heart to reply.

"You are silent, Mr. Lindsay," said the poet; "I have made you as melancholy as myself; but look around you, and say if ever you have seen a lovelier spot. See how richly the yellow sunshine slants along the green sides of Arthur's Seat, and how the thin blue smoke, that has come floating from the town, fills the bottom of yonder grassy dell, as if it were a little lake. Mark, too, how boldly the cliffs stand out along its sides, each with its little patch of shadow. And here, beside us, is St. Anthony's Well, so famous in song, coming gushing out to the sunshine, and then gliding away through the grass like a snake. Had the Deity purposed that man should be miserable, he would surely never have placed him in so fair a world. Perhaps much of our unhappiness originates in our mistaking our proper scope, and thus setting out from the first with a false aim."

"Unquestionably," I replied, "there is no man who has not some part to perform; and, if it be a great and uncommon part, and the powers which fit him for it proportionably great and uncommon, nature would be in error could he slight it with impunity. See, there is a wild bee bending the flower beside you. Even that little creature has a capacity of happiness and misery; it derives its sense of pleasure from whatever runs in the line of its instincts, its experience of unhappiness from whatever thwarts and opposes them; and can it be supposed that so wise a law should regulate the instincts of only inferior creatures? No, my friend, it is surely a law of our nature also."

"And have you not something else to infer?" said the poet.

"Yes," I replied, "that you are occupied differently from what the scope and constitution of your mind demand; differently both in your hours of employment and of relaxation. But do take heart, you will yet find your proper place, and all shall be well."

"Alas! no, my friend," said he, rising from the sward. "I could once entertain such a hope; but I cannot now. My mind is no longer what it was to me in my happier days, a sort of *terra incognita*, without bounds or limits. I can see over and beyond it, and have fallen from all my hopes regarding it. It is not so much the gloom of present circumstances that disheartens me, as a depressing knowledge of myself, an abiding conviction that I am a weak dreamer, unfitted for every occupation of life, and not less so for the greater employments of literature than for any of the others. I feel that I am a little man and a little poet, with barely vigour enough to make one half effort at a time, but wholly devoid of the sustaining will, that highest faculty of the highest order of minds, which can direct a thousand vigorous efforts to the accomplishment of one important object. Would that I could exchange my half celebrity—and it can never be other than a half celebrity—for a temper as equable and a fortitude as unshrinking as yours! But I weary you with my complaints; I am a very coward; and you will deem me as selfish as I am weak."

We parted. The poet, sadly and unwillingly, went to copy deeds in the office of the commissary clerk, and I, almost reconciled to obscurity and hard labour, to assist in unloading a Baltic trader in the harbour of Leith.

CHAPTER VI.

"Speech without aim and without end employ."—CRABBE.

After the lapse of nine months, I again returned to Edinburgh. During that period, I had been so shut out from literature and the world, that I had heard nothing of my friend the poet; and it was with a beating heart I left the vessel, on my first leisure evening, to pay him a visit. It was about the middle of July; the day had been close and sultry, and the heavens overcharged with grey ponderous clouds; and, as I passed hurriedly along the walk which leads from Leith to Edinburgh, I could hear the newly awakened thunder, bellowing far in the south, peal after peal, like the artillery of two hostile armies. I reached the door of the poet's humble domicile, and had raised my hand to the knocker, when I heard some one singing from within, in a voice by far the most touchingly mournful I had ever listened to. The tones struck on my heart; and a frightful suspicion crossed my mind, as I set down the knocker, that the singer was no other than my friend. But in what wretched circumstances! what fearful state of mind! I shuddered as I listened, and heard the strain waxing louder and yet more mournful, and could distinguish that the words were those of a simple old ballad:—

"O Marti'mas wind, when wilt thou blaw,
An' shake the green leaves aff the tree?
O gentle death, when wilt thou come,
An' tak a life that wearies me?"

I could listen no longer, but raised the latch and went in. The evening was gloomy, and the apartment ill lighted; but I could see the singer, a spectral-looking figure, sitting on a bed in the corner, with the bedclothes wrapped round his shoulders, and a napkin deeply stained

with blood on his head. An elderly female, who stood beside him, was striving to soothe him, and busied from time to time in adjusting the clothes, which were ever and anon falling off, as he nodded his head in time to the music. A young girl of great beauty sat weeping at the bedfoot.

"O dearest Robert," said the woman, "you will destroy your poor head; and Margaret your sister, whom you used to love so much, will break her heart. Do lie down, dearest, and take a little rest. Your head is fearfully gashed, and if the bandages loose a second time, you will bleed to death. Do, dearest Robert, for your poor old mother, to whom you were always so kind and dutiful a son till now—for your poor old mother's sake, do lie down."

The song ceased for a moment, and the tears came bursting from my eyes as the tune changed, and he again sang:—

"O mither dear, make ye my bed,
For my heart it's flichterin' sair;
An' oh, gin I've vexed ye, mither dear,
I'll never vex ye mair.
I've staid ar'out the lang dark nicht,
I' the sleet an' the plashy rain;
But, mither dear, make ye my bed,
An' I'll ne'er gang out again."

"Dearest, dearest Robert," continued the poor, heart-broken woman, "do lie down; for your poor old mother's sake, do lie down."

"No, no," he exclaimed, in a hurried voice, "not just now, mother, not just now. Here is my friend, Mr. Lindsay, come to see me—my true friend, Mr. Lindsay, the sailor, who has sailed all round and round the world; and I have much, much to ask him. A chair, Margaret, for Mr. Lindsay. I must be a preacher like John Knox, yo know—like the great John Knox, the reformer of a n

—and Mr. Lindsay knows all about him. A chair, Margaret, for Mr. Lindsay."

I am not ashamed to say it was with tears, and in a voice faltering with emotion, that I apologized to the poor woman for my intrusion at such a time. Were it otherwise, I might well conclude my heart had grown hard as a piece of the nether millstone.

"I had known Robert at College," I said—"had loved and respected him; and had now come to pay him a visit, after an absence of several months, wholly unprepared for finding him in his present condition." And it would seem that my tears pled for me, and proved to the poor afflicted woman and her daughter, by far the most efficient part of my apology.

"All my friends have left me now, Mr. Lindsay," said the unfortunate poet—"they have all left me now; they love this present world. We were all going down, down, down; there was the roll of a river behind us; it came bursting over the high rocks, roaring, rolling, foaming down upon us; and though the fog was thick and dark below—far below, in the place to which we were going—I could see the red fire shining through—the red, hot, unquenchable fire; and we were all going down, down, down. Mother, mother, tell Mr. Lindsay I am going to be put on my trials to-morrow. Careless creature that I am—life is short, and I have lost much time; but I am going to be put on my trials to-morrow, and shall come forth a preacher of the word."

The thunder which had hitherto been muttering at a distance—each peal, however, nearer and louder than the preceding one—now began to roll overhead, and the lightning, as it passed the window, to illumine every object within. The hapless poet stretched out his thin wasted arm, as if addressing a congregation from the pulpit:—

"There were the flashings of lightning," he said, "and the roll of thunder; and the trumpet waxed louder and louder. And around the summit of the mountain were the foldings of thick clouds, and the shadow fell brown and dark over the wide expanse of the desert. And the wild beasts lay trembling in their dens. But, lo! where the sun breaks through the opening of the cloud, there is the glitter of tents—the glitter of ten thousand tents that rise over the sandy waste, thick as waves of the sea. And there, there is the voice of the dance and of the revel, and the winding of horns and the clash of cymbals. Oh, sit nearer me, dearest mother, for the room is growing dark, dark; and, oh, my poor head!

'The lady sat on the castle wa',
Look'd ower baith dale and down,
And then she spied Gil-Morice head
Come steering through the town.'

Do, dearest mother, put your cool hand on my brow, and do hold it fast ere it part. How fearfully—oh, how fearfully it aches!—and oh, how it thunders!" He sunk backward on the pillow, apparently exhausted. "Gone, gone, gone," he muttered; "my mind gone for ever. But God's will be done."

I rose to leave the room; for I could restrain my feelings no longer.

"Stay, Mr. Lindsay," said the poet, in a feeble voice; "I hear the rain dashing on the pavement; you must not go till it abates. Would that you could pray beside me! —but, no—you are not like the dissolute companions who have now all left me, but you are not yet fitted for that; and, alas! I cannot pray for myself. Mother, mother, see that there be prayers at my lykewake; for—

'Her lykewake, it was piously spent
In social prayer and praise,
Performed by judicious men,
Who stricken were in days.

'And many a heavy, heavy heart
Was in that mournful place;
And many a weary, weary thought
On her who slept in peace.'

They will come all to my lykewake, mother, won't they? —yes, all, though they have left me now. Yes, and they will come far to see my grave. I was poor, very poor, you know, and they looked down upon me; and I was no son or cousin of theirs, and so they could do nothing for me. Oh, but they might have looked less coldly! But they will all come to my grave, mother; they will come all to my grave; and they will say—'Would he were living now to know how kind we are!' But they will look as coldly as ever on the living poet beside them—yes, till they have broken his heart; and then they will go to his grave too. O dearest mother, do lay your cool hand on my brow."

He lay silent and exhausted, and, in a few minutes, I could hope, from the hardness of his breathing, that he had fallen asleep.

"How long," I inquired of his sister, in a low whisper, "has Mr. Ferguson been so unwell, and what has injured his head?"

"Alas!" said the girl, "my brother has been unsettled in mind for nearly the last six months. We first knew it one evening on his coming home from the country, where he had been for a few days with a friend. He burnt a large heap of papers that he had been employed on for weeks before—songs and poems that his friends say were the finest things he ever wrote; but he burnt them all, for he was going to be a preacher of the word, he said, and it did not become a preacher of the word to be a writer of light rhymes. And, O sir! his mind has been carried ever since; but he has been always gentle and affectionate, and his sole delight has lain in reading the Bible. Good

Dr. Erskine, of the Greyfriars, often comes to our house, and sits with him for hours together; for there are times when his mind seems stronger than ever, and he says wonderful things, that seem to hover, the minister says, between the extravagance natural to his present sad condition, and the higher flights of a philosophic genius. And we had hoped that he was getting better; but, O sir, our hopes have had a sad ending. He went out, a few evenings ago, to call on an old acquaintance; and, in descending a stair, missed footing, and fell to the bottom; and his head has been fearfully injured by the stones. He has been just as you have seen him ever since; and, oh! I much fear he cannot now recover. Alas! my poor brother!—never, never was there a more affectionate heart."

CHAPTER VII.

"A lowly muse!
She sings of reptiles yet in song unknown."

I returned to the vessel with a heavy heart; and it was nearly three months from this time ere I again set foot in Edinburgh. Alas! for my unfortunate friend! He was now an inmate of the asylum, and on the verge of dissolution. I was thrown, by accident, shortly after my arrival at this time, into the company of one of his boon companions. I had gone into a tavern with a brother sailor —a shrewd, honest skipper, from the north country; and, finding the place occupied by half a dozen young fellows, who were growing noisy over their liquor, I would have immediately gone out again, had I not caught, in the passing, a few words regarding my friend. And so, drawing to a side-table, I sat down.

"Believe me," said one of the topers, a dissolute-looking

young man, "it's all over with Bob Ferguson—all over; and I knew it from the moment he grew religious. Had old Brown tried to convert me, I would have broken his face."

"What Brown?" inquired one of his companions.

"Is that all you know?" rejoined the other. "Why, John Brown of Haddington, the Seceder. Bob was at Haddington last year, at the election; and, one morning, when in the horrors, after holding a rum night of it, who should he meet in the churchyard but old John Brown?—he writes, you know, a big book on the Bible. Well, he lectured Bob at a pretty rate, about election and the call, I suppose; and the poor fellow has been mad ever since. Your health, Jamie. For my own part, I'm a freewill man, and detest all cant and humbug."

"And what has come of Ferguson now?" asked one of the others.

"Oh, mad, sir, mad," rejoined the toper—"reading the Bible all day, and cooped up in the asylum yonder. 'Twas I who brought him to it.—But, lads, the glass has been standing for the last half-hour.—'Twas I and Jack Robinson who brought him to it, as I say. He was getting wild; and so we got a sedan for him, and trumped up a story of an invitation for tea from a lady, and he came with us as quietly as a lamb. But, if you could have heard the shrick he gave when the chair stopped, and he saw where we had brought him! I never heard anything half so horrible—it rung in my ears for a week after; and then, how the mad people in the upper rooms howled and gibbered in reply, till the very roof echoed! People say he is getting better; but, when I last saw him, he was as religious as ever, and spoke so much about heaven, that it was uncomfortable to hear him. Great loss to his friends, after all the expense they have been at with his education."

"You seem to have been intimate with Mr. Ferguson," I said.

"Oh, intimate with Bob!" he rejoined; "we were hand and glove, man. I have sat with him in Lucky Middlemass's, almost every evening, for two years; and I have given him hints for some of the best things in his book. 'Twas I who tumbled down the cage in the Meadows, and began breaking the lamps.

> 'Ye who oft finish care in Lethe's cup,
> Who love to swear and roar, and *keep it up*,
> List to a brother's voice, whose sole delight
> Is sleep all day, and riot all the night.'

There's spirit for you! But Bob was never sound at bottom; and I have told him so. 'Bob,' I have said, 'Bob, you're but a hypocrite after all, man—without half the spunk you pretend to. Why don't you take a pattern by me, who fear nothing, and believe only the agreeable? But, poor fellow, he had weak nerves, and a church-going propensity that did him no good; and you see the effects. 'Twas all nonsense, Tom, of his throwing the squib into the Glassite meeting-house. Between you and I, that was a cut far beyond him in his best days, poet as he was. 'Twas I who did it, man, and never was there a cleaner row in auld Reekie."

"Heartless, contemptible puppy!" said my comrade, the sailor, as we left the room. "Your poor friend must be ill, indeed, if he be but half as insane as his quondam companion. But he cannot: there is no madness like that of the heart. What could have induced a man of genius to associate with a thing so thoroughly despicable?"

"The same misery, Miller," I said, "that brings a man *acquainted with strange bedfellows*."

CHAPTER VIII.

"O thou, my elder brother in misfortune,
By far my elder brother in the muses,
With tears I pity thy unhappy fate!"—BURNS.

The asylum in which my unfortunate friend was confined, at this time the only one in Edinburgh, was situated in an angle of the city wall. It was a dismal-looking mansion, shut in on every side, by the neighbouring houses, from the view of the surrounding country; and so effectually covered up from the nearer street, by a large building in front, that it seemed possible enough to pass a lifetime in Edinburgh without coming to the knowledge of its existence. I shuddered as I looked up to its blackened walls, thinly sprinkled with miserable-looking windows, barred with iron, and thought of it as a sort of burial-place of dead minds. But it was a Golgotha, which, with more than the horrors of the grave, had neither its rest nor its silence. I was startled, as I entered the cell of the hapless poet, by a shout of laughter from a neighbouring room, which was answered from a dark recess behind me, by a fearfully prolonged shriek, and the clanking of chains. The mother and sister of Ferguson were sitting beside his pallet, on a sort of stone settle which stood out from the wall; and the poet himself, weak and exhausted, and worn to a shadow, but apparently in his right mind, lay extended on the straw. He made an attempt to rise as I entered; but the effort was above his strength, and, again lying down, he extended his hand.

"This is kind, Mr. Lindsay," he said; "it is ill for me to be alone in these days; and yet I have few visitors, save my poor old mother and Margaret. But who cares for the unhappy?"

I sat down on the settle beside him, still retaining his hand. "I have been at sea, and in foreign countries," I said, "since I last saw you, Mr. Ferguson, and it was only this morning I returned; but believe me there are many, many of your countrymen who sympathize sincerely in your affliction, and take a warm interest in your recovery."

He sighed deeply. "Ah," he replied, "I know too well the nature of that sympathy. You never find it at the bedside of the sufferer—it evaporates in a few barren expressions of idle pity; and yet, after all, it is but a paying the poet in kind. He calls so often on the world to sympathize over fictitious misfortune, that the feeling wears out, and becomes a mere mood of the imagination; and, with this light, attenuated pity of his own weaving, it regards his own real sorrows. Dearest mother, the evening is damp and chill—do gather the bedclothes round me, and sit on my feet; they are so very cold and so dead, that they cannot be colder a week hence."

"O Robert, why do you speak so?" said the poor woman, as she gathered the clothes round him, and sat on his feet. 'You know you are coming home to-morrow."

"To-morrow!" he said—"if I see to-morrow, I shall have completed my twenty-fourth year—a small part, surely, of the threescore and ten; but what matters it when 'tis past?"

"You were ever, my friend, of a melancholy temperament," I said, "and too little disposed to hope. Indulge in brighter views of the future, and all shall yet be well."

"I can now hope that it shall," he said. "Yes, all shall be well with me—and that very soon. But, oh, how this nature of ours shrinks from dissolution!—yes, and all the lower natures too. You remember, mother, the poor starling that was killed in the room beside us? Oh, how it struggled with its ruthless enemy, and filled the whole place with its shrieks of terror and agony. And yet, poor little thing! it had been true, all life long, to the laws of

its nature, and had no sins to account for, and no judge to meet. There is a shrinking of heart as I look before me, and yet I can hope that all shall yet be well with me—and that very soon. Would that I had been wise in time! Would that I had thought more and earlier of the things which pertain to my eternal peace! more of a living soul, and less of a dying name! But, oh, 'tis a glorious provision, through which a way of return is opened up even at the eleventh hour!"

We sat round him in silence; an indescribable feeling of awe pervaded my whole mind, and his sister was affected to tears.

"Margaret," he said, in a feeble voice—"Margaret, you will find my Bible in yonder little recess; 'tis all I have to leave you; but keep it, dearest sister, and use it, and, in times of sorrow and suffering that come to all, you will know how to prize the legacy of your poor brother. Many, many books do well enough for life; but there is only one of any value when we come to die.

"You have been a voyager of late, Mr. Lindsay," he continued, "and I have been a voyager too. I have been journeying in darkness and discomfort, amid strange unearthly shapes of dread and horror, with no reason to direct and no will to govern. Oh, the unspeakable unhappiness of these wanderings!—these dreams of suspicion, and fear, and hatred, in which shadow and substance, the true and the false, were so wrought up and mingled together, that they formed but one fantastic and miserable whole. And, oh! the unutterable horror of every momentary return to a recollection of what I had been once, and a sense of what I had become! Oh, when I awoke amid the terrors of the night—when I turned me on the rustling straw, and heard the wild wail and yet wilder laugh—when I heard and shuddered, and then felt the demon in all his might coming over me, till I laughed and wailed with the others—oh

the misery! the utter misery!—But 'tis over, my friend—'tis all over; a few, few tedious days, a few, few weary nights, and all my sufferings shall be over."

I had covered my face with my hands, but the tears came bursting through my fingers; the mother and sister of the poet sobbed aloud.

"Why sorrow for me, sirs?" he said; "why grieve for me? I am well, quite well, and want for nothing. But 'tis cold; oh, 'tis very cold, and the blood seems freezing at my heart. Ah, but there is neither pain nor cold where I am going, and I trust it shall be well with my soul. Dearest, dearest mother, I always told you it would come to this at last."

The keeper had entered to intimate to us that the hour for locking up the cells was already past, and we now rose to leave the place. I stretched out my hand to my unfortunate friend; he took it in silence, and his thin attenuated fingers felt cold within my grasp, like those of a corpse. His mother stooped down to embrace him.

"Oh, do not go yet, mother," he said—"do not go yet—do not leave me; but it must be so, and I only distress you. Pray for me, dearest mother, and, oh, forgive me; I have been a grief and a burden to you all life-long; but I ever loved you, mother; and, oh, you have been kind, kind and forgiving—and now your task is over. May God bless and reward you! Margaret, dearest Margaret, farewell!"

We parted, and, as it proved, for ever. Robert Ferguson expired during the night; and when the keeper entered the cell next morning, to prepare him for quitting the asylum, all that remained of this most hapless of the children of genius, was a pallid and wasted corpse, that lay stiffening on the straw. I am now a very old man, and the feelings wear out; but I find that my heart is even yet susceptible of emotion, and that the source of tears is not yet dried up.

THE DISASTERS

OF JOHNNY ARMSTRONG.

JOHNNY ARMSTRONG, the hero of our tale, was, and, for aught we know to the contrary, still is, an inhabitant of the town of Carlisle. He was a stout, thickset, little man, with a round, good-humoured, ruddy countenance, and somewhere about fifty years of age at the period to which our story refers. Although possessed of a good deal of natural shrewdness, Johnny was, on the whole, rather a simple sort of person. His character, in short, was that of an honest, well-meaning, inoffensive man, but with parts that certainly did not shine with a very dazzling lustre. Johnny was, to business, an ironmonger, and had, by patient industry and upright dealing, acquired a small independency. He had stuck to the counter of his little dingy shop for upwards of twenty years, and used to boast that, during all that time, he had opened and shut his shop with his own hands every day, not even excepting one. The result of this steadiness and attention to business was, as has been already said, a competency.

Fortunately for Johnny, this propensity to stick fast—which he did like a limpet—was natural to him. It was a part of his constitution. He had no desire whatever to travel, or, rather, he had a positive dislike to it—a dislike, indeed, which was so great that, for an entire quarter of a century, he had never been three miles out of Carlisle. But when Johnny had waxed pretty rich, somewhat corpulent, and rather oldish, he was suddenly struck, one fine summer afternoon, as he stood at the door of his shop with his hands in his breeches pockets, (a favourite attitude,) with an amiable and ardent desire to see certain of his

relations who lived at Brechin, in the north of Scotland; and—there is no accounting for these things—on that afternoon Johnny came to the extraordinary resolution of paying them a visit—of performing a journey of upwards of a hundred miles, even as the crow flies. It was a strange and a desperate resolution for a man of Johnny's peculiar temperament and habits; but so it was. Travel he would, and travel he did. On the third day after the doughty determination just alluded to had been formed, Johnny, swathed in an ample brown greatcoat, with a red comforter about his neck, appeared in the stable yard of the inn where most of the stage coaches that passed through Carlisle put up. Of these there were three: one for Dumfries, one for Glasgow, and one for Edinburgh—the latter being Johnny's coach; for his route was by the metropolis. We had almost forgotten to say that Johnny, who was a widower, was accompanied on this occasion by his son, Johnny junior, an only child, whom it was his intention to take along with him. The boy was about fourteen years of age, and though, upon the whole, a shrewd enough lad for his time of life, did not promise to be a much brighter genius than his father. In fact he was rather lumpish.

On arriving at the inn yard—it was about eight o'clock at night, and pretty dark, being the latter end of September—Johnny Armstrong found the coach apparently about to start, the horses being all yoked; but the vehicle happened, at the moment he entered the yard, to be in charge of an ostler—not of either the guard or driver, who had both gone out of the way for an instant. Desirous of securing a good seat for his son, Johnny Armstrong opened the coach door, thrust the lad in, and was about to follow himself, when he discovered that he had forgotten his watch. On making this discovery, he banged to the coach door without saying a word, and hurried home as fast as his little, thick, short legs would allow him, to recover his

time-piece. On his return, which was in less than five minutes, Johnny himself stepped into the vehicle, which was now crowded with passengers, and, in a few seconds, was rattling away at a rapid rate towards Edinburgh. The night was pitch dark, not a star twinkled; and it was not until Johnny arrived at his journey's end—that is, at Edinburgh—that he discovered his son was not in the coach, and had never been there at all. We will not attempt to describe Johnny's amazement and distress of mind on making this most extraordinary and most alarming discovery. They were dreadful. In great agitation, he inquired at every one of the passengers if they had not seen his son, and one and all denied they ever had. The thing was mysterious and perfectly inexplicable.

"I put the boy into the coach with my own hands," said Johnny Armstrong, in great perturbation, to the guard, and half crying as he spoke.

"Very odd," said the guard.

"Very odd, indeed," said Johnny.

"Are you sure it was *our* coach, Mr. Armstrong?" inquired the guard.

The emphasis on the word *our* was startling. It evidently meant more than met the ear; and Johnny felt that it did so, and he was startled accordingly.

"*Your* coach?" he replied, but now with some hesitation of manner. "It surely was. What other coach could it be?"

"Why, it may have been the Glasgow coach," said the guard; "and I rather think it *must* have been. You have made a mistake, sir, be assured, and put the boy into the wrong coach. We start from the same place, and at the same hour, five minutes or so in an over."

The mention of this possibility, nay certainty, for Johnny had actually dispatched the boy to Glasgow, instantly struck him dumb. It relieved him, indeed, from

the misery arising from a dread of some terrible accident having happened the lad, but threw him into great tribulation as to his fate in Glasgow, without money or friends. But this being, after all, comparatively but a small affair, Johnny was now, what he had not been before, able to pay attention to minor things.

"Be sae guid," said Johnny to the guard, who was on the top of the coach, busy unloosing packages, "as haun me doun my trunk."

"No trunk of yours here, sir," said the guard. "You'll have sent it away to Glasgow with the boy."

"No, no," replied Johnny, sadly perplexed by this new misfortune. "I sent it wi' the lass to the inn half an hour before I gaed mysel."

"Oh, then, in that case," said the guard, "ten to one it's away to Dumfries, and not to Glasgow."

And truly such was the fact. The girl, a fresh-caught country lass, had thrown it on the first coach she found, saying her master would immediately follow—and that happened to be the Dumfries one. Here, then, was Johnny safely arrived himself, indeed, at Edinburgh; but his son was gone to Glasgow, and his trunk to Dumfries—all with the greatest precision imaginable. Next day, Johnny Armstrong, being extremely uneasy about his boy, started for Glasgow on board of one of the canal passage boats; while the lad, being equally uneasy about his father, and, moreover, ill at ease on sundry other accounts, did precisely the same thing with the difference of direction—that is, he started for Edinburgh by a similar conveyance; and so well timed had each of their respective departures been, that, without knowing it, they passed each other exactly halfway between the two cities. On arriving at Glasgow, Johnny Armstrong could not, for a long while, discover any trace of his son; but at length succeeded in tracking him to the canal boat—which led him rightly to conclude

that he had proceeded to Edinburgh. On coming to this conclusion, Johnny again started for the metropolis, where he safely arrived about two hours after his son had left it for home, whither, finding no trace of his father in Edinburgh, he had wisely directed his steps. Johnny Armstrong, now greatly distressed about the object of his paternal solicitude, whom he vainly sought up and down the city, at last also bent his way homewards, thinking, what was true, that the boy might have gone home; and there indeed he found him. Thus nearly a week had been spent, and that in almost constant travel, and Johnny found himself precisely at the point from which he had set out. However, in three days, after having, in the meantime, recovered his trunk, he again set out on his travels to Brechin; for his courage was not in the least abated by what had happened; but on this occasion unaccompanied by his son, as he would not again run the risk of losing him, or of exposing himself to that distress of mind on his account, of which he had been before a victim. In the case of Johnny's second progress, there was "no mistake" whatever, of any kind—at least at starting. Both himself and his trunk arrived in perfect safety, and in due time, at Edinburgh.

Johnny's next route was to steam it to Kirkaldy from Newhaven. The boat started at six a.m.; and, having informed himself of this particular, he determined to be at the point of embarkation in good time. But he was rather late, and, on finding this, he ran every foot of the way from Edinburgh to the steam-boat, and was in a dreadful state of exhaustion when he reached it; but, by his exertions, he saved his distance, thereby exhibiting another proof that all is not lost that's in danger. An instant longer, however, and he would have been too late, for the vessel was just on the eve of starting. Johnny leapt on board, or rather was bundled on board; for Johnny, as

already hinted, was in what is called good bodily condition—rather extra, indeed—and was, moreover, waxing a little stiff about the joints; so that he could not get over the side of the boat so cleverly as he would have done some twenty years before. Over and above all this, he was quite exhausted with the race against time which he had just run. Seeing his distressed condition, and that the boat was on the point of sailing, two of the hands leapt on the pier, when the one seizing him by the waistband of the breeches, and the other by the breast, they fairly pitched him into the vessel, throwing his trunk after him. As it was pouring rain, Johnny, on recovering his perpendicular, immediately descended into the cabin, and, in the next instant, the boat was ploughing her way through the deep. For two hours after he had embarked, it continued to rain without intermission; and for these two hours he remained snug below without stirring. At the end of this period, however, it cleared up a little, and, in a short while thereafter, became perfectly fair. Having discovered this he ascended to the deck, to see what was going on. The captain of the vessel was himself at the helm; he, therefore, sidled towards him, and, after making some remarks on the weather and the scenery, asked the captain, in the blandest and civilest tones imaginable, when he expected they would be at Kirkaldy. The man stared at Johnny with a look of astonishment, not unmingled with displeasure; but at length said—

"Kirkaldy, sir! What do you mean by asking me that question? I don't know when *you* expect to be at Kirkaldy, but *I* don't expect to be there for a twelvemonth at least."

"No!—od, that's queer!" quoth Johnny, amazed in his turn; but thinking, after a moment, that the captain meant to be facetious, he merely added—"I wad think, captain, that we wad be there much about the same time."

"Ay, ay, may be; but, I say, none of your gammon, friend," said the latter, gruffly, and now getting really angry at what he conceived to be some attempt to play upon him, though he could not see the drift of the joke. "Mind your own business, friend, and I'll mind mine."

This he said with an air that conveyed very plainly a hint that Johnny should take himself off, which, without saying any more, he accordingly did. Much perplexed by the captain's conduct, he now sauntered towards the fore part of the vessel, where he caught the engineer just as he was about to descend into the engine-room. Johnny tapped him gently on the shoulder, and the man, wiping his dripping face with a handful of tow, looked up to him, while Johnny, afraid to put the question, but anxious to know when he really would be at Kirkaldy, lowered himself down, by placing his hands on his knees, so as to bring his face on a level with the person he was addressing, and, in the mildest accents, and with a countenance beaming with gentleness, he popped the question in a low, soft whisper, as if to deprecate the man's wrath. On the fatal inquiry being made at him, the engineer, as the captain had done before him, stared at Johnny Armstrong, in amazement, for a second or two, then burst into a hoarse laugh, and, without vouchsafing any other reply, plunged down into his den.

"What in a' the earth can be the meanin' o' this?" quoth Johnny to himself, now ten times more perplexed than ever. "What can there be in my simple, natural, and reasonable question, to astonish folk sae muckle?"

This was an inquiry which Johnny might put to himself, but it was one which he could by no means answer. Being, however, an easy, good-natured man, and seeing how much offence in one instance, and subject for mirth in another, he had unwittingly given, by putting it, he resolved to make no further inquiries into the matter, but to await in

patience the arrival of the boat at her destination—an event which he had the sense to perceive would be neither forwarded nor retarded by his obtaining or being refused the information he had desired to be possessed of. The boat arrived in due time at the wished-for haven, and Johnny landed with the other passengers; the captain giving him a wipe, as he stepped on the plank that was to convey him ashore, about his Kirkaldy inquiries, by asking him, though now in perfect good humour, if he knew the precise length of that celebrated town; but Johnny merely smiled and passed on.

On landing, Johnny Armstrong proceeded to what had the appearance of, and really was, a respectable inn. Here, as it was now pretty far in the day, he had some dinner, and afterwards treated himself to a tumbler of toddy and a peep at the papers. While thus comfortably enjoying himself, the waiter having chanced to pop into the room, Johnny raised his eye from the paper he was reading, and, looking the lad in the face—

"Can ye tell me, friend," he said, "when the coach for Dundee starts?"

"There's no coach at all from this to Dundee, sir," replied the waiter.

"No!" said Johnny, a little nonplused by this information. "That's odd." The waiter saw nothing odd in it.

"I was told," continued Johnny, "that there were twa or three coaches daily from this to Dundee."

"Oh, no, sir," said the lad, coolly, "you have been misinformed; but if you wish to go to Dundee, sir," he added—desirous of being as obliging as possible—"your best way is to go by steam from this to Newhaven, and from that cross over to Kirkaldy!!!"

At this fatal word, which seemed doomed to work Johnny much wo, the glass which he was about to raise to his lips fell on the floor, and went into a thousand pieces.

"Kirkaldy, laddie!" exclaimed Johnny Armstrong, with an expression of consternation in his face which it would require Cruikshank's art and skill to do justice to—"Gude hae a care o' me, is *this* no Kirkaldy?"

"Kirkaldy, sir!" replied the waiter, no less amazed than Johnny, though in his case it was at the absurdity of the inquiry—"oh, no, sir," with a smile—"this is Alloa!!!"

Alloa it was, to be sure; for Johnny had taken the wrong boat, and that was all. On embarking, he had made no inquiries at those belonging to the vessel, and, of course, those in the vessel had put none to him—and this was the result. He was comfortably planted at Alloa, instead of Kirkaldy, which all our readers know lies in a very different direction; and this denouement also explains the captain's displeasure with his passenger, and the engineer's mirth. At the moment this extraordinary *eclaircissement* took place between Johnny Armstrong and the waiter of the King's Arms, there happened to be a ship captain in the room—for it was the public one; and this person, who was a good-natured fellow, at once amused by, and pitying Johnny's dilemma, turned towards him, and inquired if it was his intention to go any further than Dundee.

Johnny said that it was—he intended going to Brechin.

"Oh, in that case," said the captain, "you had better just go with me. In an hour after this I sail for Montrose, which is within eight miles of Brechin, and I'll be very glad to give you a cast so far, and we shan't differ about the terms. Fine, smart little vessel mine, and, with a spanking breeze from the west or sou'-west, which we'll very likely catch about Queensferry, I'll land you in a jiffey within a trifle of your journey's end—a devilish sight cleverer, I warrant you, than your round-about way of steaming and coaching it, and at half the money too."

Johnny Armstrong was all gratitude for this very opportune piece of kindness, and gladly closed with the offer

--the captain and he taking a couple of additional tumblers each, on the head of it, to begin with. We say to begin with; for it by no means ended with the quantity named. The captain was a jolly dog, and loved his liquor, and was, withal, so facetious a companion, that he prevailed on his new friend to swallow a great deal more than did him any good. To tell a truth, which, however, we would not have known at Carlisle, Johnny Armstrong, who had the character of a sober man, got, on this occasion, into a rather discreditable condition, and, in this state, he was escorted by the captain—who stood liquor like a water-cask—to the vessel, and was once more embarked; but it was now on board the *Fifteen Sisters* of Skatehaven. On getting him on board, the captain, seeing the state he was in, prudently bundled him down into the cabin, and thrust him into his own bed, where he immediately fell into a profound sleep that extended over twelve mortal hours. At the end of this period, however, Johnny awoke; but it was not by any means of his own accord, for he was awakened by a variety of stimulants, or *rousers*, if we may be allowed to coin a word for the occasion, all operating at once. These were, a tremendous uproar on the deck, a fearful rolling of the vessel, the roaring of wind, and the splashing, dashing, and gurling of waves; and, to crown all, a feeling of deadly sickness. When he first opened his eyes, he could not conceive where he was, or what was the meaning of the furious motion that he felt, and of the tremendous sounds that he heard. A few minutes' cogitation with himself, however, solved the mystery, and exposed to him his true position. In great alarm—for he thought the vessel was on the eve of going down—Johnny Armstrong rolled himself out of his bed, and crawled in his shirt up the cabin ladder. On gaining the summit, he found himself confronted by the captain, who, with a very serious face, was standing by the helm.

"Are—are—are—we—near—Mon—trose, captain?" inquired Johnny, in a voice rendered so feeble by sickness and terror, that it was impossible to hear him a yard off, amidst the roaring of the winds and waves; for we suppose we need not more explicitly state, that he was in the midst of a storm, and as pretty a one it was as the most devoted admirer of the picturesque could desire to see.

"What?" roared the captain, in a voice of thunder, at the same time stooping down to catch his feeble interrogatory. Johnny repeated it; but, ere he could obtain an answer, a raking wave, which came in at the stern, took him full on the breast as he stood on the companion ladder, with his bust just above the level of the deck, sent him down, heels over head, into the cabin, and, in a twinkling, buried him in a foot and a half of water on the floor, where he lay for some time at full length, sprawling and floundering amidst the wreck which the sudden and violent influx of water had occasioned. On recovering from the stunning effects of his descent—for he had, amongst other small matters, received a violent contusion on the head—Johnny for an instant imagined that he had somehow or other got to the bottom of the sea. Finding, however, at length, that this was not precisely the case, he arose, though dripping with wet, yet not very like a sea god, and having denuded himself of his only garment, his shirt, crawled into his bed, where he now determined to await quietly and patiently the fate that might be intended for him; and this fate, he had no doubt, was suffocation by drowning.

"Very extraordinar this," said Johnny Armstrong to himself, as he lay musing in bed on the perilous situation into which he had so simply and innocently got—"very extraordinar, that I couldna get the length o' Brechin without a' this uproar, and confusion, and difficulty, and danger; this knocking about frae place to place, half drooned and half murdered. Here have I been now for

mair than a week at it, and it's my opinion I'm no twenty mile nearer't yet than I was, for a' this kick up. Dear me," he went on soliloquizing, "I'm sure Brechin's no sic an out o' the way place. The road's straught, and the distance no great. Then, how, in the name o' wonder, is it that I canna mak' it out like ither folk, let me do as I like?"

Thus cogitated Johnny Armstrong as he lay on his bed of sickness, sorrow, and danger. But his cogitations could in no way mend the matter, nor, though they could, was he long permitted to indulge in them; for that mortal sickness under which he had been before suffering, but which the little incident of the visit from the wave, with its consequences, had temporarily banished, again returned with tenfold vigour, making him regardless of all sublunary things—even of life itself. In this state of supineness and suffering did Johnny lie for three entire days and nights—for so long did the storm continue with unabated fury—the vessel having, for some four-and-twenty hours previously, been quite unmanageable, and driving at the mercy of the winds and waves. A dreadful crash, however, at length announced that some horrible crisis was at hand. The vessel had struck, and, in a few seconds more, she was in a thousand pieces, and her unfortunate crew, including Johnny Armstrong, were struggling in the waves. From this instant he lost all consciousness; and, when he again awoke to life, he found himself lying on the sea-beach; but how he had come there he never could tell, nor could he at all conjecture by what accident his life had been saved, when all the rest in the ill-fated vessel had perished; for Johnny was indeed the only person that had escaped. On coming to himself he started to his feet, and gazed around him, with a bewildered look, to see if any object would present itself that might help him to guess where he was. But his survey affording him no such aid to recognition, he began to move inland, in the

hope of meeting with somebody who could give him the information desired; and in this he was not disappointed, that is, he did meet somebody; but the appearance of that somebody surprised Johnny "pretty considerably." He had a high-crowned hat on, such as Johnny had never seen in his life before; an enormous pair of breeches; and a pipe a yard long in his mouth. His *tout ensemble*, in short, was exceeding strange in Johnny Armstrong's eyes. Nevertheless, he accosted him.

"Can ye tell me, freen, how far I may be frae Brechin?" he inquired.

The stranger shook his head, but made no reply.

"I'm sayin', freen," repeated Johnny, in a louder tone, thinking that his friend, as he called him, might possibly be dull of hearing, "can ye tell me if I'm onything near Brechin?"

The stranger again shook his head, but still said nothing. Johnny was confounded. At length, however, after puffing away for some seconds with a suddenly-increased energy, he slowly withdrew his pipe from his mouth, and delivered himself of what sounded to Johnny's ears very much like this, spoken with great rapidity.

"Futra butara rap a ruara dutera muttera purra murra footra den, Preekin, humph."

Of this Johnny of course could make nothing, no more than the reader can, further than recognising in the word "Preekin" a resemblance to the name of the town he so anxiously inquired after; and he was sorely perplexed thereat. Neither could he at all comprehend what sort of a being he had fallen in with.

"I dinna understan' a word o' what ye say, freen," at length said Johnny, staring hard at the stranger with open mouth.

"Umph!" said the latter; and he again withdrew his pipe from his mouth, and again sent a volley of his "dutera

mutteras" about Johnny's ears, to precisely the same purpose as before.

Finding that it was of no use making any further attempt at conversation, Johnny passed on, not doubting that he had met either with a *dummy* or a madman. But what was Johnny's amazement when, shortly afterwards, meeting a woman, whose dress, in its own way, was equally odd and strange with that of the person he had just left, he was answered (that is, to his queries again about Brechin), in the same gibberish in which the former had responded to him.

"What can be the meanin' o' this?" said Johnny to himself, in great perplexity of mind, as he jogged on, after leaving the lady in the same unsatisfactory way as he had left the gentleman. "Whar in a' the earth can I hae gotten to, that naebody I meet wi' can understan' a word o' plain English, or can speak themsels onything like an intelligible language?"

He now began to think that he had probably got into the Highlands; but, although this supposition might account for the strangeness of the language he had heard, it would not, he perceived, tally very well with the enormous breeches which the gentleman he had met with wore, and which he had seen from a distance others wearing, knowing, as he did very well, that the national dress of the Highlanders was the kilt, of which the trousers in question were the very antipodes. There was another circumstance, too, that appeared to Johnny at variance with his first conjecture, namely, that he might have got into the Highlands. Where he was there were no high lands, not an eminence the height of a mole-hill. On the contrary, the whole country, as far as his eye could reach, seemed one vast plain. Though greatly puzzled by these reflections, Johnny jogged on, and his progress at length brought him to a respectable-looking farm-house.

"'Od," said Johnny, "I'll surely get a mouthfu' o' sense frae somebody here, an' fin' out whar I am."

In this Johnny certainly did succeed; but not much to his comfort, as the sequel will show. The first person he addressed, on approaching the house, was a little girl, who, when he spoke, stared at him in the greatest amazement, then rushed screaming into the house. This proceeding brought out several young men and women, to whom Johnny now addressed himself; but the only answer he obtained was a stare of astonishment similar to the child's, and then a general burst of laughter. At length one of the girls went into the house and brought out a jolly-looking elderly man, who, from certain parts of his dress, seemed to be in the seafaring way.

"Vell, mine freend, vat you vant?" said this person, who spoke broken English—"vere you come from?"

"I cam last frae Alloa," said Johnny, "and I want to ken, sir, if I'm onything near to Brechin?"

"Preekin! vere dat?"

"'Od, I thocht everbody in Scotland kent that," said Johnny, smiling.

"Ah! maybe Scotlan', mine freend, but no Hollands," replied he of the broken English.

"I dinna ken whether they ken't it in Holland or no," said Johnny; "that's a country I'm no in the least acquaint wi'; but I'm sure it's weel aneuch kent in Scotland."

"Ah! maybe Scotlan', but no Hollands, my freend," repeated the man, smiling in his turn; "but you vas in Hollands."

"Never in my life," said Johnny, earnestly.

"No, no," replied the man, impatiently, "you vas no in Hollands—but you vas in Hollands."

Johnny could make nothing of this; but it was soon cleared up by the person adding, "You vas in Hollands *now*—dis moment."

We will not even attempt to describe Johnny's amazement, horror, and consternation, on this announcement being made to him, for we feel how vain it would be, and how far short any idea we could convey would be of the reality.

"Holland!" said Johnny. "Heaven hae a care o' me! Ye surely dinna mean to say that I'm in Holland the noo?"

"To be sure I vas," said the Dutchman, smiling at Johnny's ludicrous perturbation. "Mine Got, did you not know you vas in Hollands? Vere you come from, in all de vorlds, you not know dat?"

"I tell't ye already," replied Johnny, with a most rueful countenance, "that I cam last frae Alloa. But ye're surely no in earnest, freen," he added, in a desperate hope that it might, after all, be but a joke, "when ye say that I'm in Holland?"

"Ah! sure earneest—no doubt—true," said the Dutchman, now laughing outright at Johnny's perplexity.

As in the former case, we presume we need not be more explicit in saying that Johnny had actually been wrecked on the coast of Holland.

"Weel, weel," said the Brechin voyager, with an air expressive of more calmness and resignation than might have been expected, "this does cowe the gowan! How, in Heaven's name, am I ever to fin' my way hame again? Little did I think I was ever to be landed this way amang savages."

Johnny Armstrong, it will be here observed, could have been no great reader—otherwise, he never would have applied the term savages to so decent, industrious, and civilized a people as the Dutch. The Dutchman, who was a kind, good-natured fellow—taking no offence whatever at Johnny's unbecoming expression, because probably he did not understand it, and compassionating his situation—

now invited him into the house, where Johnny, having succeeded in conveying to the whole household, through the medium of the speaker of broken English, the story of his misfortunes, was treated with much hospitality. With these kind people Johnny Armstrong remained for about a week—for they would not allow him to go sooner—when, having entirely recovered from the effects of his sea voyage and shipwreck, he proceeded to Rotterdam; being accompanied and assisted in all his movements by his benevolent host, Dunder Vander Dunder, of Slootzsloykin. On arriving at Rotterdam, a passage was engaged for Johnny on board one of the Leith packets, or regular traders, in which he was next day snugly deposited; and, in an hour after, he was again braving the dangers of the ocean. For some time all went on well on this occasion with him, and he was beginning to feel comfortable, and even happy, from the prospect of being soon again in his native land, and from the superior accommodations of the vessel in which he was embarked—far surpassing, as they did, those of the unfortunate *Sisters* of Skatehaven. His present ship was, in truth, a remarkably fine one, and altogether seemed well adapted for encountering the elements. The weather, too, was moderate, and the wind fair; so that a quick and pleasant passage was confidently anticipated by all on board, including Johnny Armstrong. All these agreeable circumstances combined, made him feel extremely comfortable and happy; and, in the exuberance of his feelings, and from the exciting sense of having at length triumphed over his misfortunes—it might almost be said his fate—Johnny even began to joke and laugh with those whom he found willing to joke and laugh with him. It was while in this happy frame of mind, and as he stood luxuriously leaning over the bulwark of the vessel, that the captain suddenly espied a little, smart, cutter-looking craft, sailing exactly in the same course with them-

selves, and evidently endeavouring to make up with them.

"What can the folk be wantin'?" quoth Johnny Armstrong, taking an interest in the approaching barge. His question was one which nobody could answer. In the meantime, the little vessel, moving with great velocity, was fast nearing them, when the captain, now convinced that those in her desired to have some communication with him, arrested his own vessel's way, and awaited their coming. In a very few minutes, the little cutter was alongside, and two men leapt from her to the deck of the packet, when one of them, approaching the captain, told him that they were messengers, that they had a warrant against John Jones, a native of Britain, for debt, and that they had reason to believe he was in the vessel. The captain said he did not believe he had any such passenger on board, but informed them that they were perfectly at liberty to search the ship. During this conversation, the other officer kept his eye fixed on Johnny Armstrong, and when rejoined by his comrade, seemed to inform him—for their language was not understood—that there was something about that person well worthy of his attention. They now both looked at Johnny, and appeared both convinced that he was a fit subject for further inquiry. Accordingly one of them addressed him:—

"Your name vas John Jones, mynheer?"

"No, sir," said Johnny; "my name's John Armstrong."

"Ah, a small shange—dat is all. You vas John, and he vas John, and you be both John togidder; so, you must come to de shore wid us."

"Catch me there, lads," quoth Johnny. "The deil a shore I'll gang to, please Providence, but Leith shore. Na, na; I've had aneuch o' this wark, and I'm determined to bring't till an' end noo."

"Donner and blitzen!" shouted out one of the men,

passionately, "but you must go!"—at the same time seizing Johnny by the collar, and drawing a pistol from his bosom.

In utter amazement at this extraordinary treatment, Johnny Armstrong imploringly called on the captain and the other passengers for protection; but, as none of them were in the least acquainted with him, and therefore did not know whether he was John Jones or not, they all declined interfering—the captain saying that it would be more than his ship and situation were worth to aid any one in resisting the laws of the country—that he could not, dare not do it. His appeals, therefore, to those around him being vain, he was eventually bundled into the cutter and conveyed on shore, placed in a temporary place of confinement for the night, and next day carried before a magistrate to be identified. To effect this, several witnesses were called, when one and all of them, after examining Johnny pretty narrowly, pronounced, to the great disappointment of the officers who had apprehended him, that he was *not* the man! They, however, asserted that the resemblance between the real and supposed John Jones was very remarkable. On the discovery being made that the prisoner was not Jones, the magistrate apologized to Johnny in the most polite terms for the trouble he had been put to, and expressed great regret for the mistake of the officers; but said that, as the witnesses had stated there was a strong resemblance—an unfortunate one, he must call it—between him and the real defaulter, and seeing, moreover, that they were both natives of Britain, the officers were perfectly justified in doing what they had done, however much the hardship of the case might be matter of regret. The magistrate having thus delivered himself, Johnny Armstrong was dismissed with great civility, and wished, by all present, safe home to his own country—a wish in which he most heartily concurred, but

which seemed to him more easily entertained than gratified. On regaining his liberty, the first thing he did was to endeavour to find out when the next ship sailed for Scotland; he having, of course, lost that in which he had first embarked, and, to his great consternation and dismay, learned that there would be no vessel for a fortnight. This was sad intelligence to Johnny; for, to add to his other distresses, his funds were now waxing low, and he felt that it would require the utmost economy to enable him to spin out the time and leave sufficient to pay his passage to his native land. This economy he could very easily have practised at home, for he had a natural tendency that way; but he did not know how to set about it in a foreign country. His unhappiness and anxiety, therefore, on this point were very great. In this dilemma, he bethought him of again seeking out and quartering on his friend Vander Dunder, of Slootzsloykin, till the vessel should sail; but not having, of course, a word of Dutch, he could make no inquiries on the subject of his route, or indeed of anything regarding his friend at all. This idea, therefore, he ultimately abandoned, principally through a fear that he should, by some mistake, be despatched upon a wrong scent, a species of disaster to which he was now so sensitively alive, that he would neither turn to the right nor to the left without having made himself perfectly sure that he was about to take the right course; and, as to conveyances of all kinds, of which he now entertained an especial suspicion, he had prudently determined that he would know every particular about them and their destinations before he would put a foot in one of them, for he had found, from dear-bought experience, that if he did not take this precaution, the chance was that he would never reach the place he desired to get at, and might be whisked away to some unknown country, where he would never more be heard of.

Under this wholesome terror, Johnny made no attempt to find out his friend Vander Dunder; but chance effected, in part at least, what his limited knowledge of Dutch put it out of his power, with set purpose, to accomplish. On turning the corner of a street, who should he have the good fortune to meet with but Vander Dunder. The astonishment of the good Dutchman on seeing Johnny was great, so great, indeed, as to overcome the natural phlegm of his constitution. Holding up his hands in amazement—

"Mine Got, my freend! are you shipwrack agen?" he exclaimed.

"No, no," quoth Johnny—"bad aneuch, but no just sae bad as that." And he proceeded to inform his friend of the real state of the case.

The good-natured Dutchman was shocked at the recital, and felt ten times more than ever for Johnny's unhappy situation and complicated misfortunes. When he had concluded his affecting story—

"I tell you what you do, mine goot freend," said Vander Dunder—"you go vith me to Slootzsloykin, and you remain vith me dere till your ship sail. You do dat, mine goot freend."

"Wi' a' my heart," said Johnny, "and muckle obleeged to ye for yer kindness."

"No, no—no obleege at all," replied the kind-hearted Dutchman, impatiently. "Yo do the same to me in your coontry if I was shipwrack and in misfortune, and put to trooble for an innocent thief."

"Aweel, maybe I wad; but, nevertheless, its kind o' you to offer me the shelter o' yer roof," replied Johnny.

Dunder Vander Dunder now took his friend into a tavern, and treated him to a glass of schnaps. Shortly thereafter the two embarked in a canal boat for Slootzsloykin, where they finally arrived in safety. Here Johnny

met with the same kind treatment as before; and of that kindness there was no abatement during the whole fortnight of his sojourn. At the end of this period, Johnny Armstrong once more set out for Rotterdam, on the day previous to the sailing of the vessel in which he now hoped to reach his native land, without further molestation or interruption. And, certainly, everything had the appearance of going right on this occasion. The vessel, with Johnny on board, sailed at the appointed time, and, before embarking, he had read distinctly on the ticket—a large black board, with yellow letters, which was fastened to the shrouds—that she was bound for Leith, and was the identical vessel he had had in his eye. So far as this went, there could be no mistake whatever. There was, indeed, one little circumstance that startled Johnny, but which he had not discovered till the vessel had been some time at sea. This was, that all the crew were Dutchmen, there not being a Scotchman amongst them. The circumstance did not, indeed, greatly alarm Johnny, but he certainly did think it a little odd; for he naturally expected that, as she was a Leith vessel, her crew would be, for the most part, at any rate, natives of Britain. However, he made no remarks on the subject, thinking it, as it really was, a matter of perfect indifference whether they were Scotchmen or Dutchmen. There were two or three passengers in the vessel besides himself; but they were all foreigners too, so that he could hold no converse with any of them; and thus debarred from intercourse with his fellow voyagers, he sat by himself, gazing from the deck of the vessel on the waste of waters with which he was surrounded, and musing on the strange series of mishaps of which he had so simply and innocently become the victim. It was while thus employed—the vessel having been now a good many hours at sea, and at the moment scudding away before a fine fresh breeze—that the captain approached Johnny, and in very

polite and civil terms, demanded his passage money. As he spoke in Dutch, however, the latter did not understand him. The captain observing this, and now guessing what countryman he was, addressed him in very good English, and in that language repeated his demand. With this demand, Johnny instantly complied; and, finding that he was a civil, good-natured fellow, began to open up a little conversation with him. His first remark was, that he hoped they would have good weather. The captain hoped so too. His second remark was, that they had a fine breeze. The captain agreed with him—said it was a delightful breeze—and added that, if it continued to blow as it then blew for four-and-twenty hours, he expected they would be all safe at *Rouen!*

"At whar?" shouted out Johnny, looking aghast at the speaker.

"At Rouen, to be sure," repeated the captain, wondering at Johnny's amazement.

"Gude's mercy!" exclaimed Johnny, with dreadful energy, "are ye no gaun to Leith?—is this no a Leith boat?"

"Oh, no," said the captain smiling; "this is the Rouen packet. Were ye not aware of that, sir? You have got into a sad scrape, my friend, if you were not," he added, and now laughing outright at the dismal expression of Johnny's countenance.

"Heaven hae a care o' me!" said Johnny despairingly. "Did I no read distinctly on the ticket that was fastened to yer shroods, that ye were bound for Leith?"

"Yes, yes," replied the captain, "you may have seen such a ticket as you speak of, and there was certainly such a ticket on our shrouds as you say, but it did not refer to this ship, but to the vessel outside of us. We allowed the board to be exhibited on our shrouds merely to accommodate our neighbour, as it could not be read from his—he being on the outside, and we next the quay. That, my friend,

is a piece of civility very commonly practised at seaports by one vessel to another, when similarly situated as we and they were. You will see it at all quays and wharfs."

Johnny Armstrong groaned, but said nothing. At length, however, he muttered, in a tone of Christian-like resignation—

"The Lord's will be dune! I see it's settled that I am never to get hame again; but to be keepit gaun frae place to place ower the face o' the earth, like anither wanderin' Jew. Gude hae a care o' me, but this is awfu'! Its judgment like."

It certainly was very remarkable, but not in the least mysterious. This new mistake of Johnny, like all the rest, was a perfectly simple occurrence; and, like them, too, arose as plainly and naturally out of circumstances as it was possible for any effect to do from a cause. But, however this may be, the captain—although he could not help laughing at the awkward predicament of his passenger—really felt for him, seeing the distress he was in, and was so much influenced by this feeling as to offer to convey him back to Rotterdam, to which, he said, he would return in two days, free of any charge; adding, with a smile, and with the kind intention of reconciling Johnny to what could not now be helped, that it was nothing, after all—that it would make a difference of only a few days—and that it would be always showing him a little more of the world.

"Mony thanks to ye," said Johnny, perceiving and appreciating the friendly purpose of the captain; "and I'll e'en tak advantage o' yer kind offer; but as to seein' the world, by my faith, I've seen now about just as muckle o't as I want to see, and maybe a trifle mair—a hantle mair, at ony rate, than I ever expected to see." Then, in a soliloquizing tone and manner—"God keep me, whar's Brechin noo! A' that I wanted, and a' that I intended, was to get to that bit paltry place; and, instead o' that, here am I

within a stane-east o' the north pole, for aught I ken to the contrar, and, to a' appearances, no half dune wi't yet. Heaven kens whar I'll be sent niest!—maybe be landed on Owhyhee, or on some desert island, like another Robinson Crusoe. Na, it's certain, if things gang on muckle langer this way."

Of the drift or scope of these remarks, or, at any rate, of the feelings that dictated them, the captain could make nothing, not knowing Johnny's precise circumstances; nor did he seek to have them explained, but contented himself with repeating his offer of conveying Johnny back to Rotterdam, and renewing his well-meant efforts to reconcile him to his fate, in so far as his present voyage was concerned. In the meantime, the wind continued to blow in a manner perfectly satisfactory in every respect to all on board the *Jungfrau* of Rotterdam and Rouen; and, in about the space of time mentioned by the captain, the vessel reached her destination in safety. Johnny Armstrong, whose whole mind was absorbed by anxiety to reach that home which he yet seemed destined never again to see, took no interest whatever in the scenes presented to him in the part of the world he was now in. Indeed, he never left the vessel at all, for fear she would slip through his fingers; for, if he was afraid of accidents of this kind before, he was ten times more so now; and, with this fear upon him, that the packet might, by some chance or other, escape him, he determined to stick by her—never to lose sight of her for a moment, till she had conveyed him back to Rotterdam; and his vigilance ultimately secured the end he had in view. The *Jungfrau* sailed from Rouen with Johnny on board, and, in due time, deposited him once more at Rotterdam. But what was Johnny's surprise, what Dunder Vander Dunder's amazement, when they again encountered one another, and that within ten minutes of the former's landing! The amazement of the latter, how-

ever, was, on this occasion, evidently mingled with a degree of suspicion of the perfect uprightness of Johnny's character. He began now to think, in short, that there had been more in the circumstance of Johnny's apprehension than he had been informed of. He did not like these frequent re-appearances; he thought them very odd—and he did not hesitate to say so.

"Mine Got! vat you here again for, man? Vat is de meaning of all dis, mine goot freend?" he exclaimed, with a somewhat dry and doubtful manner, quite at variance with the cordial tone of his former greetings.

Johnny Armstrong explained to him, but seemingly without obtaining implicit credence for all he said. When he had done—

"'Tis veree odd," said Vander Dunder, coldly; "veree straunge. But, you really vant to go to Scotlan, dere is vessel going to sail for Leet now, and I vill see you on board mineself."

It was very questionable whether Vander's civility, in this case, proceeded from a desire really to serve Johnny, or from a wish to get fairly rid of him. However this might be, Johnny readily accepted his offer, and at once accompanied him to the vessel he alluded to, which was, indeed, on the point of sailing. Vander, taking care that there should be no mistake in this case, conducted him down into the cabin, and waited on the quay till he saw the vessel fairly under weigh.

Having brought the disasters of Johnny Armstrong to this point, we proceed now to finish what we assure our readers, is an "ower true tale."

As we were strolling down the pier of Leith, with a friend, one afternoon in the year 18—, we saw a vessel making for the harbour. It was high water, and the scene altogether was a very pleasing and a very stirring one. But, amongst the various objects of interest that presented

themselves, there was none that attracted so much of our attention as the stately vessel that, with outspread canvas, was rapidly nearing the pier. We asked a seaman who stood beside us, where she was from. He replied—"Rotterdam."

On approaching the pier, the vessel shortened sail, and, by this process, enabled us deliberately to scan her decks from our elevated position, as she glided gently along with us. During this scrutiny, we observed amongst the passengers a stout little man in a brown greatcoat, with a large red comforter about his neck, and his hat secured on his head—for it was blowing pretty hard—by a blue pocket-handkerchief, which was passed beneath his chin, and gave him, in a very particular manner, the peculiar air of a traveller or *vóyageur*. There was nothing whatever in the appearance of the little man in the brown greatcoat which would have led any one to suppose, *à priori*, that there possibly could be anything remarkable or extraordinary in his history; but I was induced suddenly to change my opinion, or at least to take some interest in him, by my friend's exclaiming, in the utmost amazement, and, at the same time, pointing to him with the red comforter—

"Gracious Heaven, if there is not Johnny Armstrong! Or it is his ghost!"

"No ghost at all, we warrant you," said we; "ghosts do not generally wear greatcoats and red comforters. But who in all the world is Johnny Armstrong?"

"Johnny Armstrong," replied our friend, greatly excited, "is a person, a particular acquaintance of mine, who has been missing these six weeks; and who was supposed, by everybody who knew him, to have perished by some accident or other, but of what nature could never be ascertained, on his way to Brechin, where he had gone to visit some relations."

We felt interested in Johnny, by this brief sketch of his mysterious story; and, not a little curious to know where on

earth he could possibly have been all the time, we readily closed with our friend's proposal to run round to the berth for which we saw the vessel was making, and to await his coming on shore.

"But how, in all the world," said our friend, communing with himself during this interval, "has he got into a vessel from Rotterdam? He could not have been there, surely? It's impossible."

As to this we could say nothing, not knowing at the time anything at all of Johnny's adventures; but of these we were not now long kept in ignorance. On his stepping on shore, our friend seized him joyously by the hand, and expressed great satisfaction at seeing him again. This satisfaction appeared to be mutual; for Johnny returned his friend's grasp with great cordiality and warmth. The first salutations over—

"But where on all the earth, Mr. Armstrong," said our friend, "have you been for these three months back?"

Johnny smiled, and said it was "ower lang a tale" to tell where we then were; but, as he meant to stop either in Leith or Edinburgh for the night, it being now pretty far in the evening, if my friend and I would adjourn with him to some respectable house, where he could get a night's quarters, he would give us the whole story of his adventures. With this proposal we readily closed; and on Johnny asking if we could point out such a house as he alluded to, we at once named the New Ship Tavern. Thither we accordingly repaired; and, in less than two hours thereafter, we were put, good reader, in possession, by Johnny himself, of that part of his story to which the preceding pages have been devoted. What follows—for Johnny's misfortunes had not yet terminated—we learned afterwards from another quarter.

On the next day—we mean the day succeeding the evening we spent with Johnny—the latter proceeded to

Edinburgh, with the view of taking coach there for Carlisle. But, in making his way up Catherine Street, and when precisely opposite No. 12, Calton Street—we like to be particular—Johnny found himself suddenly accosted by one of his oldest and most intimate friends. This was a Mr. James Stevenson, a fellow-townsman and fellow-shopkeeper of his own.

The astonishment of the latter, on meeting with Johnny, and, indeed, of finding him at all in the land of the living, was very great; and he sufficiently expressed this feeling by the lively and highly excited manner in which he addressed him.

Having put the usual queries, with that air of intense interest which they naturally excited, as to where Johnny had been, what he had been about, &c. &c., and having obtained a brief sketch of his adventures, with the promise of a fuller one afterwards, Mr. Stevenson, in reply, asked Johnny what course he was now steering.

"Hame, to be sure," said Johnny, with a smile. "It's time noo, I think—I'm just sae far on my way to tak' oot a ticket for the coach."

"Ye needna do that unless ye like," replied Johnny's friend. "Ye may save your siller, and no be abune an hour langer tarried, by takin' a seat wi' me in the gig I hae in wi' me. I'm sure ye're welcome, and I'll be blythe o' your company."

"Hae ye a gig in wi' ye?" said Johnny, looking pleased by the intelligence.

"'Deed hae I, Mr. Armstrong, and ye'll just clink down beside me in't."

I'll do that wi' great thankfu'ness," replied Johnny, "and muckle obleeged by the offer."

The friends now walked away, arm in arm together; and in about two hours afterwards—Mr. Stevenson having, in the meantime, despatched what business he had to do in

the city—they were both seated in the gig, and birring it on merrily towards Carlisle.

Neither Mr. Stevenson nor Johnny, however, were great whips—a deficiency which was by no means compensated for by the circumstance of their having a rather spirited horse, although blind of an eye. He was, in truth, a very troublesome animal; boggling and shying at everything that presented itself to his solitary optic. Notwithstanding this, the travellers got on very well for a time, and were whirling over the ground at a rapid rate, when an unlucky cart of hay came in their way at a narrow turn of the road. How this simple occurrence should have operated so unfavourably as it did for them, we shall explain.

A cart of hay is not a very alarming object to rational creatures like ourselves, but to the one-eyed horse of the travellers it appeared a very serious affair; for it had no sooner presented itself to his solitary organ of vision than he pricked up his ears, snorted furiously, and began to exhibit sundry other symptoms of disquietude. By dint, however, of some well-directed punishment from Jamie Stevenson's whip, which Johnny increased by an energetic application of his stick, the restive animal was brought *up* to the waggon of hay; but, for some time, the inducements just mentioned failed to prevail on him to *pass* it.

At length, however, Johnny having added greatly to the vigour of his blows with his stick, and his neighbour to that of his strokes with the whip, the horse *did* pass the waggon, and that with a vengeance. Taking heart, or rather becoming desperate, he bolted past it with the rapidity of a cannon shot; and not only this, but when he had cleared it, continued the velocity of his movements with unabated energy, to the great discomfort and no small terror of both Johnny and his companion, who now found themselves going at a rate which they had neither anticipated nor desired. Indeed, this was so very great that

both directly saw that something was wrong. Both saw, in short, what was, indeed, too true, that the horse had fairly run away with them; for he was now going like the wind, with fury and distraction in his looks. It was a shocking and most dreadfully alarming affair; and so Johnny and his friend felt it to be, as might be distinctly seen by their horror-stricken faces.

On discovering the predicament they were in, both the travellers—the one dropping his whip, and the other his stick—seized on the reins, and began pulling with all their might, in the desperate hope of checking the animal's speed by main force; Johnny, in his terror, exclaiming the while, distractedly—

"Mair o't yet, mair o't yet! Lord have a care o' me, but this is awfu'! This is waur than onything I hae met wi' yet. Waur than the *Fifteen Sisters*, Dutchmen, and a'. God be wi' us! are my misfortunes never to hae an end, till they hae finished me outricht? Am I never to get safe to either ae place or anither?—either to hame or to Brechin? Surely ane o' them might be permitted to me. O, Jamie, see hoo he's gaun! He doesna seem to fin' us at his hurdies, nae mair than if we war a pair o' preencushions."

This was true enough, The horse in his fury did not indeed seem to feel either them or the vehicle they were seated in, but pushed madly onwards, till he came to where the road divided itself into two distinct roads—the one being the right one, and the other, of course, the wrong—when, as if inspired by Johnny's evil genius, he at once took the latter, and in little more than twenty minutes, had him and his friend fully half as many miles out of their way. Now, however, the catastrophe was to be wound up. A milestone caught one of the wheels of the gig, canted it over, and threw Johnny sprawling on the road with a broken leg; his friend, although also thrown, escaping wholly unhurt.

"Aweel, here it's at last," said Johnny, sitting up in the mud amongst which he had been planted, and fully believing that his injuries were fatal. "Here it's at last. I'm clean dune for noo, after a' my escapes. It may be noo plainly seen, I think," he went on, "that some evil spirit has had me in its power, for these six weeks past at ony rate, and has been gowfin' me about the world like a fitba', to kill me wi' a gig at last."

Luckily, Johnny's injuries did not prove so serious as he had feared they would do; and no less fortunate was it that the accident to which they were owing happened not far from a small country town in which there was a resident surgeon. To the latter place Johnny was immediately removed on a temporary bier, hastily constructed for the purpose by some labouring men who chanced to be near the spot where the accident happened, and there he lay for six entire weeks, when the surgeon above alluded to, and who had attended him all that time, intimated to him that he might now venture to return home. Delighted with the intelligence, Johnny instantly acted on it, and next day entered Carlisle triumphantly in a post-chaise—not looking, nor really being, after all, much the worse for his unprecedented adventures, save and except a lameness in the injured limb, which ever after imparted to his movements the graceful up-and-down motion produced by that peculiar longitudinal proportion of the nether limbs, designated by the descriptive definition of "a short leg and a shorter." Having, with this last occurrence, concluded the story of Johnny's disasters, we have only to add that Johnny has never, to this good hour, got the length of Brechin—nor will, he says, ever again make the attempt.

THE PROFESSOR'S TALES.*

THE MOUNTAIN STORM.

PACKMAN *loquitur*.—For several days the wind had been easterly, with an intense frost. At last, however, the weather subsided into a calm and dense fog, under which, at mid-day, it was difficult to find one's way amidst those mountain tracks along which, in general, my route lay. The grass and heath were absolutely loaded with hoar-frost. My cheeks became encompassed by a powdered covering; my breath was intensely visible, and floated and lingered about my face with an oppressive and almost suffocating density. No sun, moon, or star had appeared for upwards of forty-eight hours; when, according to my preconcerted plan, I reached the farm town of Burnfoot. I was now in the centre of Queensberry Hills, the most notable sheep-pasturage in the south of Scotland. It was about three o'clock of the fifteenth day of January, when, under a cheerful welcome from the guidwife, I rested my pack (for, be it known, I belong to this class of peripatetic merchants) upon the meal ark, disengaged my arms from the leather straps by which the pack was suspended from my shoulders, and proceeded to light my pipe at the blazing peat-fire. Refreshments, such as are best suited to the *packman's drouth*,

* The author of these stories (to be continued), the well-known Professor Thomas Gillespie, was one of the principal writers in *Blackwood* during the "storm and stress" period of that magazine. As an author, his peculiarity consisted in vivid descriptions of scenery and incidents coming within the range of a very eccentric experience, all given with a versatility and *abandon* which he could not restrain, and which, being the reflex of a poetical enthusiasm, formed the charm of his writings.—*Ed.*

were soon and amply supplied, and I had the happiness of seeing my old acquaintances (for I visited Burnfoot twice a year, on my going and coming from Glasgow to Manchester) drop *in* from their several avocations, one after another, and all truly rejoiced to behold my face, and still more delighted to inspect the treasure and the wonders of "the pack." At last the guidman himself suspended his plaid from the mid-door head, put off his shoes and leggings, assumed his slippers, along with his prescriptive seat at the head or upper end of the lang-settle. The guidwife, returning *butt* from bedding the youngest of some half-score of children, welcomed her husband with a look of the most genuine affection. She put a little creepie stool under his feet, felt that his clothes were not wet, scolded the dogs to a respectful distance, and inspired the peats into a double blaze. The oldest daughter, now "woman grown," sat combing the hoar-frost from her raven locks, and looking out from beneath beautifully arched and bushy eyebrows upon the interesting addition which had been made to the meal-ark. Some half-a-score of healthy lads and lasses occupied the bench ayont the fire, o'er-canopied by sheepskins, aprons, stockings, and footless hose. The dogs, after various and somewhat noisy differences had been adjusted, fell into order and position around the hearth, enjoying the warmth, and licking, peacefully and carefully, the wet from their sides. The cat, by this time, had made a returning motion from the cupboard head, from which she had been watching the arrangements and movements beneath. As this appeared to "Help" to be an infringement of the terms of armistice and of the frontier laws, he sprang with eagerness over the hearth. Pussy, finding it dangerous, under this sudden and somewhat unexpected movement, "*dare terga*," instantly drew up her whole body into an attitude not only of defence, but defiance ; curving herself into a bristling crescent, with the head of a dragon attached to it,

and, with one horrid hiss and sputter, compelled Help first to hesitate and then to retreat.

> "Three paces back the youth retired,
> And saved himself from harm."

The guidwife, however,—who seemed not unaccustomed to such demonstrations, and who manifestly acted on the humane principle of assisting the weaker by assailing the stronger combatant—gave Help such demonstrations of her intentions, as at once reduced matters to the *status quo ante bellum*. (I have as good a right to scholarship as my brother packman, Plato, who carried oil to Egypt.) Thus peace and good order being restored, the treasures of my burden became an immediate and a universal subject of inquiry. I was compelled, nothing loath, to unstrap my various packages, and disclose to view all the varied treasures of the spindle and loom. Shawls were spread out into enormous display, with central, and corner, and border ornaments, the most amazing and the most fashionable; waistcoat pieces of every stripe and figure, from the straight line to the circle, of every hue and colouring which the rainbow exhibits, were unfolded in the presence and under the scrutinizing thumb of many purchasers. The guidwife herself half coaxed and half scolded a fine remnant of Flanders lace, of most tempting aspect, out of the guidman's reluctant pocket. The very dogs seemed anxious to be accommodated, and applied their noses to some unopened bales, with a knowing look of inquiry. Things were proceeding in this manner, when the door opened, and there entered a young man of the most prepossessing appearance; in fact, what Burns terms a "strapping youth." I could observe that, at his entrance, the daughter's eye (of whom I have formerly made mention) immediately kindled into an expression of the most universal kindness and benevolence. Hitherto she had taken but a limited interest in

what was going on; but now she became the most prominent figure in the group—whilst the mother dusted a chair for the welcome stranger with her apron, and the guidman welcomed him with a—

"Come awa, Willie Wilson, an' tak a seat. The nicht's gay dark an' dreary. I wonder how ye cleared the Whitstane Cleugh and the Side Scaur, man, on sic an eerie nicht."

"Indeed," responded the stranger, casting a look, in the meantime, towards the guidman's buxom, and, indeed, lovely daughter—"indeed, it's an unco fearfu' nicht—sic a mist and sic a cauld I hae seldom if ever encountered; but I dinna ken hoo it was—I coulda rest at hame till I had tellt ye a' the news o' the last Langhom market."

"Ay, ay," interrupted the guidwife; "the last Langhom market, man, is an auld tale noo, I trow. Na, na, yer mither's son camna here on sic a nicht, and at sic an hour, on sic an unmeaning errand"—finishing her sentence, however, by a whisper into Willie's ear, which brought a deeper red into his cheek, and seemed to operate in a similar manner on the apparently deeply engaged daughter.

"But, Watty," continued my fair purchaser, "you *must* give me this Bible a little cheaper—it's ower dear, man—heard ever onybody o' five white shillings gien for a Bible, and it only a New Testament, after a'?—it's baith a sin an' a shame, Watty."

After some suitable reluctance, I was on the point of reducing the price by a single sixpence, when Willie Wilson advanced towards the pack, and at once taking up the book and the conversation—

"Ower dear, Jessie, my dear!—it's the word o' God, ye ken—his ain precious word; and I'll e'en mak ye a present o' the book at Watty's ain price. Ye ken he maun live, as we a' do, by his trade."

The money was instantly paid down from a purse pretty will filled; for William Wilson was the son of a wealthy and much respected sheep-farmer in the neighbourhood, and had had his name *once* called in the kirk, along with that of "Janet Harkness of Burnfoot, both in this parish."

"Hoot noo, bairns," rejoined the mother; "ye're baith wrang—that Bible winna do ava. Ye maun hae a big ha' Bible to take the buik wi', and worship the God o' yer fathers nicht and morning, as they hae dune afore ye; and Watty will bring ye ane frae Glasgow the next time he comes roun'; and it will, maybe, be usefu', ye ken, in *anither way.*"

"Tout, mither, wi' yer nonsense," interrupted the conscious bride; "I never liked to see my name and age marked and pointed out to onybody on oor muckle Bible; sae just haud yer tongue, mither, and tak a present frae William and *me*," added she, blushing deeply, "o' that big printed Testament. The minister, ye ken, seldom meddles wi' the auld Bible, unless it be a bit o' the Psalms; and yer een noo are no sae gleg as they were whan ye were married to my father there."

The father, overcome by this well-timed and well-directed evidence of goodness, piety, and filial affection, rose from his seat on the long-settle, and, with tears in his eyes, pronounced a most fervent benediction over the shoulders of his child.

"O God in heaven, bless and preserve my dear Jessie!" said he—his child's tears now falling fast and faster. "Oh, may the God of thy fathers make thee happy—thee and thine—him there and his!—and when thy mother's grey hairs and mine are laid and hid in the dust, mayest thou have children, such as thy fond and dutiful self, to bless and comfort, to rejoice and support thy heart!"

There was not, by this time, a dry eye in the family; and, as a painful silence was on the point of succeeding to

this outbreaking of nature, the venerable parent slowly and deliberately took down the big ha' Bible from its bole in the wall, and, placing it on the lang-settle table, he proceeded to family worship with the usual solemn prefatory annunciation—"Let us worship God."

Love, filial affection, and piety—what a noble, what a beautiful triumvirate! By means of these, Scotland has rendered herself comparatively great, independent, and happy. These are the graces which, in beautiful union, have protected her liberties, sweetened her enjoyments, and exalted her head amongst the nations, and which, over all, have cast an expression and a feature irresistibly winning and nationally characteristic. It is over such scenes as the kitchen fireside of Burnfoot now presented, that the soul hovers with ever-awakening and ever-intenser delight; that even amidst the coldness, and unconcern, and irreligion of an iron age, the mind, at least at intervals, is redeemed into ecstasy, and feels, in spite of habit, and example, and deadened apprehensions, that there is a beauty in pure and virgin love, a depth in genuine and spontaneous filial regard, and an impulse in communion with Him that is most high, which, even when taken separately, are hallowing, sacred, and elevating; but which, when blended and softened down into one great and leading feature, prove incontestably that man is, in his origin and unalloyed nature, but a little lower than the angels.

Such was the aspect of matters in this sequestered and sanctified dwelling, when the house seemed, all at once, to be smitten, like Job's, at the four corners. The soot fell in showers into the grate; the rafters creaked; the dust descended; every door in the house rattled on its sneck and hinges; and the very dogs sprung at once from their slumbers and barked. There was something so awful in the suddenness and violence of the commotion, that the prayer was abruptly and suddenly brought to a conclusion.

"Ay, fearfu', sirs!" were John Harkness' first words when springing to his feet; "but there's an awfu' nicht. Open the outer door, Jamie, and let us see what it is like." The outer door was opened; but the drift burst in with such a suffocating swirl, that a strong lad who encountered it, reeled and gasped for breath.

"The hogs!" exclaimed the guidman, "and the gimmers!—where did ye leave them, Jamie?"

"In Capleslacks," was the answer, "by east the Dod. The wind has set in frae the nor'-east, and fifty score o' sheep, if this continue, will never see the mornin'"

But what was to be done?

"The wind blew as 'twould blawn its last,"

and the whole atmosphere was one almost solid wreath of penetrating snow; when you thrust forth your hand into the open air, it was as if you had perforated an iceberg. Burnfoot stands at the convergence of two mountain glens, adown one of which the tempest came as from a funnel—collected, compressed, irresistible. There was a momentary look of suspense—every one eying the rest with an expression of indecision and utter helplessness. The young couple, by some law of affinity, stood together in a corner. The shepherd lads, with Jamie Hogg at their head, were employed in adjusting plaids to their persons. The guidman had already resumed his leggings, and the dogs were all exceedingly excited—amazed at this unexpected movement, but perfectly resolved to do their duty.

"Jamie," said the guidman, "you and I will try to mak oor way by the Head Scaur to Capleyetts, where the main hirsel was left; and Will, Tam, and Geordie will see after the hogs and gimmers ayont the Dod."

"I, too," exclaimed a voice from the corner, over which, however, a fair hand was pressed, and which was therefore but indistinctly heard—"I will—(canna ye let me speak, Jessie!)—I will not, I shall not be left behind—I will ac-

company the guidman, and do what I can to seek and to save."

"Indeed and indeed, my dear William, ye can do nae guid—ye dinna ken the grun' like my faither; and there's mony a kittle step forbye the Head Scaur; and, the Lord be wi' us! on sic a nicht too." So saying, she clasped her betrothed firmly around the neck, and absolutely compelled him to relinquish his purpose. Having gained this one object, the fair and affectionate bride rushed across the room to her father, and falling down on her knees, grasped him by the legs, and exclaimed—

"O mither, mither! come and help me—come and help me! faither, my dear faither, let Jamie Hogg gang, and the rest; they are young, ye ken, and as weel acquant as yersel' wi' the ly o' the glens! but this is no a nicht for the faither o' a family to risk his life to save his substance. O faither, faither! I am soon, ye ken, to leave you and bonny Burnfoot—grant me, oh, grant me this one, this last request!"

The mother sat all this while wringing her hands and exclaiming—

"Ay, ay, Jenny, get him to stay, get him to stay!"

The father answered not a word, but, making a sign to Hogg, and whistling on Help, and at the same time kissing his *now* all but fainting child, he rushed out of the door (as Mrs. Harkness said) "like a fey man," and he and his companion, with a suitable accompaniment of dogs, were almost instantly invisible. The three other lads, suitably armed and accompanied, followed the example set to them; and the guidwife, the two lovers, five or six younger branches, and the female servants of the family, with myself, remained at home in a state of anxiety and suspense which can be better conceived than expressed.

"The varnished clock that clicked behind the door,"

with a force and a stroke loud and painful in the extreme,

struck first ten, then eleven, then twelve; but there was no return. Again and again were voices heard commingling with the tempest's rush; again and again did the outer door seem to move backwards on its hinges; but nothing entered save the shrill pipe of the blast, accompanied by the comminuted drift, which penetrated through every seam and cranny. This state of uncertainty was awful; even the ascertained reality of death, partial or universal, had perhaps less of soul-benumbing cold in it than this inconceivable suspense. It required Willie Wilson's utmost efforts and mine to keep the frantic woman from madly rushing into the drift; and the voice of lamentation was sad and loud amongst the children and the servant lasses—each of the latter class lamented, indeed, the fate of all, but there was always an under prayer offered up for the safety of Geordie, or Will, or Jamie, in particular. At last the three lads who had encompassed the Dod arrived —alive, indeed, but almost breathless and frozen to death. They had, however, surmounted incredible difficulties, and had succeeded in placing their hirsel in a position of comparative security; but where were Jamie Hogg and the guidman? The violence of the storm had nothing abated, the snow was every moment accumulating, and the danger and difficulty increasing tenfold. Spirits, heat, and friction gradually restored the three lads to their senses, and to the kind attentions of their several favourites of the female order; but *there* sat the mother and the daughter, whilst the father was either, in all probability, dead or dying. The very thought was distracting; and, accordingly, the young bride, now turning to her lover with a look of inexpressible anguish, exclaimed—

"O Willie! my ain dear Willie, ye maun gang, after a', ye maun gang this instant," (Willie was on his feet and plaided whilst yet the sentence was unfinished,) "and try to rescue my dear, dear faither from this awfu' and untimely

end; but tak care, oh tak care o' the big Scaur, and keep far west by Caplecleuch, and maybe ye'll meet them coming back that way." These last words were lost in the drift, whilst Willie Wilson, with his faithful follower, Rover, were penetrating, and flouncing, and floundering their way towards the place pointed out.

In about half an hour after this, the howl and scratch of a dog were heard at the door-back, and Help immediately rushed in, the welcome forerunner of his master and Hogg. They had, indeed, had a fearful struggle, and fearful wanderings; but, in endeavouring to avoid the dangerous, because precipitous, Head Scaur, they had wandered from the track, and from the object of their travel; and, after having been inclined once or twice to lie down and take a rest (the deceitful messenger of death), they had at last got upon the track of Caple Water; and, by keeping to its windings—which they had often traced at the risk of being drowned—they had at last weathered the old cham'er, the byre, and peat-stack, and were now, thank God! within "bigget wa's."

But where, alas! was Willie Wilson? Him, in consequence of their deviations, they had missed; and over him, thus exposed, the tempest was still renewing at intervals its hurricane gusts. There was one scream heard, such as would have penetrated the heart of a tiger, and all was still. There she lay, the beauteous, but now marble bride; her head reposing on her mother's lap, her lips pale as the snowdrop, her eyes fixed and soulless, her cheek without a tint, and her mouth half-open and breathless. Long, long was the withdrawment—again and again was the dram-glass applied to the mouth, to catch the first expiration of returning breath—ere the frame began to quiver, the hands to move, the lips and cheeks to colour, and the eyes to indicate the approaching return to reason and perception.

"I have killed him! I have killed him!" were the first frantic accents. "I have murdered, murdered my dear Willie! It was me that sent him—forced him—compelled him out—out into the drift—the cold, cold drift. Away!" added the maniac—"away! I'll go after him—I'll perish with him—where he lies, there will I lie, and there will I be buried. What! is there none of ye that will make an effort to save a perishing—a choking—oh, my God! a suffocating man?"

Hereupon she again sank backwards, and was prevented from falling by the arms of a father.

"O my child!" said parental love and affection—"O my dear wean!—oh, be patient!—God is guid—He has preserved *us* all—He will not desert *him* in the hour of his need—He neither slumbers nor sleeps—His hand is not shortened that He cannot save—and what He can, He will—He never deserted any that trusted in Him. O my child! my bairn!—my first-born!—be patient—be patient. There—there—there is a scratch at the door-back—it is Rover."

And to be sure Rover it was—but Rover in despair. His faithful companion and friend only entered the house to solicit immediate aid—he ran round and round, looking up into the face of every one with an expression of the most imploring anxiety. The poor frantic girl sprung from her father's embrace, and clung to the neck of the well-known cur—she absolutely kissed him—(oh, to what will not love, omnipotent, virtuous love, descend!)—then rising, in renewed recollection, she sat herself down on the long-settle beside her father, and burst into loud and passionate grief.

It was now manifest to all that something must be attempted, else the young farmer must perish. Hogg, though awfully exhausted, was the first to volunteer a new excursion. The whole band were at once on their feet;

but Jessie now clung to her father, as she had formerly done to her lover, and would not let him go—indeed, the guidman was in no danger of putting his purpose into effect, for he could scarcely stand on his feet. He sat, or rather fell down, consequently, beside his daughter, and continued in constant prayer and supplication at the throne of grace. The daughter listened, and said she was comforted—the voyagers were again on their way—the tempest had somewhat abated—the moon had once or twice shone out—and there was now a greater chance of success in their undertaking.

How we all contrived to exist during an interval of about two hours, I cannot say; but this I know, that the endurance of this second trial was worse than the first, to all but the sweet bride herself. Her mind had now taken a more calm and religious view of the case. She repeated, at intervals and pauses in her father's ejaculatory prayer—

"Yes—oh, yes—*His* will—His holy will be done! The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away—blessed be the name of the Lord for ever! We shall meet again—oh, yes—where the weary are at rest.

'A few short years of evil past,
We reach the happy shore
Where death-divided friends at last
Shall meet, to part no more.'

O father, is not that a gracious saying, and worthy of all acceptation!"

At length the door opened, and in walked William Wilson.

The reader need scarcely to be told that the sagacious dog had left his master floundered, and unable to extricate himself in a snow wreath; that the same faithful guide had taken the searchers to the spot, where they found Wilson just in the act of falling into a sleep—from which,

indeed, but for the providential sagacity of his dog, he had never wakened; and that, by means of some spirits which they had taken in a bottle, they completely restored and conducted him home.

"Lives there one with soul so dead"

as not now to image the happy meeting betwixt bride and bridegroom, and, above all, the influence which this trial had upon the happiness and religious character of their future married and prosperous lot?

It is, indeed, long since I have laid aside the pack—to which, after a good education, I had taken, from a wandering propensity—and taken up my residence in the flourishing village of Thornhill, Dumfriesshire; living, at first, on the profits of my shop, and now retired on my little, but, to me, ample competency; but I still have great pleasure in paying a yearly visit to my friends of Mitchelslacks, and in recalling with them, over a comfortable meal, the interesting incidents of the snow storm 1794.

THE FAIR MAID OF CELLARDYKES.

I DID not like the idea of having all the specimens of the fine arts in Europe collected into one "bonne bouche" at the Louvre. It was like collecting, while a boy, a handful of strawberries, and devouring them at one indiscriminating gulp. I do not like floral exhibitions, for the same reason. I had rather a thousand times meet my old and my new friends in my solitary walks, or in my country rambles. All museums in this way confound and bewilder me; and had the Turk not been master of Greece, I should have preferred a view of the Elgin marbles in the land of their nativity. And it is for a similar reason that my mind still reverts, with a kind of dreamy delight, to the

time when I viewed mankind in detail, and in all their individual and natural peculiarities, rather than *en masse*, and in one regimental uniform. Educate up! Educate up! Invent machinery—discover agencies—saddle nature with the panniers of labour—and, at last, stand alongside of her, clothed, from the peasant to the prince, in the wonders of her manufacture, and merrily whistling, in idle unconcern, to the tune of her unerring despatch! But what have we gained? One mass of similarities: the housemaid, the housekeeper, the lady, and the princess, speaking the same language, clothed in the same habiliments, and enjoying the same immunities from corporeal labour—the colours of the rainbow whirled and blended into one glare of white! Towards this *ultimatum* we are now fast hastening. Where is the shepherd stocking-weaver, with his wires and his fingers moving invisibly? Where the "wee and the muckle wheel," with the aged dames, in pletted toys, singing "Tarry woo?" Where the hodden-grey clad patriarch, sitting in the midst of his family, and mixing familiarly, and in perfect equality with all the household—servant and child? My heart constantly warms to these recollections; and I feel as if wandering over a landscape variegated by pleasant and contrasting colouring, and overshadowed with associations which have long been a part of myself. One exception to the general progression and assimilation still happily remains to gratify, I must confess, my liking for things as they were. The fisher population of Newhaven, Buckhaven, and Cellardykes —(my observation extends no farther, and I limit my remarks accordingly)—are, in fact, the Scottish highlanders, the Irish, the Welsh, and the Manks of Fisherdom. Differing each somewhat from the other, they are united by one common bond of character—they are varieties of the same animal—the different species under one genus. I like this. I am always in high spirits when I pass through a

fishing village or a fisher street. No accumulation of filth in every hue—of shell, and gill, and fish-tail—can disgust me. I even smell a sweet savour from their empty baskets, as they exhale themselves dry in the sunbeam. And then there is a hue of robust health over all. No mincing of matters. Female arms and legs of the true Tuscan order—cheeks and chins where neither the rose nor the bone has been stinted. Children of the dub and the mire—all agog in demi-nudity, and following nature most vociferously. Snug, comfortable cabins, where garish day makes no unhandsome inquiries, and where rousing fires and plentiful meals abide from June to January. They have a language, too, of their own—the true Mucklebacket dialect; and freely and firmly do they throw from them censure, praise, or ribaldry. The men are here but men; mere human machines—useful, but not ornamental—necessary incumbrances rather than valuable protectors. "Poor creature!" says Meg of the Mucklebacket, "she canna maintain a man." Sir Walter saw through the character I am labouring to describe; and, in one sentence, put life and identity into it. I know he was exceedingly fond of conversing with fisherwomen in particular. But, whilst such are the general features, each locality I have mentioned has its distinctive lineaments. The Newhaven fisherwoman (for the man is unknown) is a bundle of snug comfort. Her body, her dress, her countenance, her basket, her voice, all partake of the same character of *enbonpointness*. Yet there is nothing at all untidy about her. She may ensconce her large limbs in more plaiden coverings than the gravedigger in "Hamlet" had waistcoats, but still she moves without constraint; and under a burden which would press my lady's waiting-maid to the carpet, she moves free, firm, elastic. Her tongue is not labour-logged, her feet are not creel-retarded; but, altogether unconscious of the presence of hundreds, she holds

on her way and her discourse as if she were a caravan in the desert. She is to be found in every street and alley of Auld Reekie, till her work is accomplished. Her voice of call is exceedingly musical, and sounds sweetly in the ears of the infirm and bedrid. All night long she holds her stand close by the theatre, with her broad knife and her opened oyster. In vain does the young spark endeavour to engage her in licentious talk. He soon discovers that, wherever her feelings or affections tend, they do not point in his favour. Thus, loaded with pence, and primed with gin, she returns by midnight to her home—there to share a supper-pint with her man and her neighbours, and to prepare, by deep repose, for the duties of a new day. Far happier and far more useful she, in her day and generation, than that thing of fashion which men call a beau or a belle—in whose labours no one rejoices, and in whose bosom no sentiment, but self finds a place. In Buckhaven, again, the Salique law prevails. There men are men, and women mere appendages. The sea department is here all in all. The women, indeed, crawl a little way, and through a few deserted fields, into the surrounding country; but the man drives the cart, and the cart carries the fish; and the fish are found in all the larger inland towns eastward. Cellardykes is a mixture of the two—a kind of William and Mary government, where, side by side, at the same cart, and not unfrequently in the same boat, are to be found man and woman, lad and lass. Oh, it is a pretty sight to see the Cellardyke fishers leaving the coast for the herring-fishing in the north! I witnessed it some years ago, as I passed to Edinburgh; and this year I witnessed it again.

Meeting and conversing with my old friend the minister of the parish of Kilrenny, we laid us down on the sunny slope of the brae facing the east and the Isle of May, whilst he gave me the following narrative:—

Thomas Laing and Sarah Black were born and brought up under the same roof—namely, that double-storied tenement which stands somewhat by itself, overlooking the harbour. They entered by the same outer door, but occupied each a separate story. Thomas Laing was always a stout, hardy, fearless boy, better acquainted with every boat on the station than with his single questions, and far fonder of little Sarah's company than of the schoolmaster's. Sarah was likewise a healthy, stirring child, extremely sensitive and easily offended, but capable, at the same time, of the deepest feelings of gratitude and attachment. Thomas Laing was, in fact, her champion, her Don Quixote, from the time when he could square his arms and manage his fists; and much mischief and obloquy did he suffer among his companions on account of his chivalrous defence of little Sally. One day whilst the fisher boys and girls were playing on the pier, whilst the tide was at the full, a mischievous boy, wishing to annoy Thomas, pushed little Sall into the harbour, where, but for Thomas's timely and skilful aid (for he was an excellent swimmer,) she would probably have been drowned. Having placed his favourite in a condition and place of safety, Tom felled the offender, with a terrible fister, to the earth. The blow had taken place on the pit of the stomach, and was mortal. Tom was taken up, imprisoned, and tried for manslaughter; but, on account of his youth—being then only thirteen—he was merely imprisoned for a certain number of months. Poor Sally, on whose account Tom had incurred the punishment of the law, visited him, as did many good-natured fishermen, whilst in prison, where he always expressed extreme contrition for his rashness. After the expiry of his imprisonment, Tom returned to Cellardykes, only to take farewell of his parents, and his now more than ever dear Sally. He could not bear, he said, to face the parents of the boy whose death he had

occasioned. The parting was momentary. He promised to spend one night at home; but he had no such intention —and, for several years, nobody knew what had become of Thomas Laing. The subject was at first a speculation, then a wonder, next an occasional recollection; and, in a few months, the place which once knew bold Tom Laing, knew him no more. Even his parents, engaged as they were in the active pursuits of fishing, and surrounded as they were by a large and dependent family, soon learned to forget him. One bosom alone retained the image of Tom, more faithfully and indelibly than ever did coin the impression of royalty. Meanwhile, Sarah grew—for she was a year older than Tom—into womanhood, and fairly took her share in all the more laborious parts of a fisher's life. She could row a boat, carry a creel, or drive a cart with the best of them; and, whilst her frame was thus hardened, her limbs acquired a consistency and proportion which bespoke the buxom woman rather than the bonny lass. Her eye, however, was large and brown, and her lips had that variety of expression which lips only can exhibit. Many a jolly fisher wished and attempted to press these lips to his; but was always repulsed. She neither spoke of her Thomas, nor did she grieve for him much in secret; but her heart revolted from a union with any other person whilst Thomas might still be alive. Upon a person differently situated, the passion (for passion assuredly it was) which she entertained for her absent lover, might and would have produced very different effects. Had Sarah been a young boarding-school miss, she would assuredly either have eloped with another, or have died in a madhouse; had she been a sentimental sprig of gentility, consumption must have followed: but Sarah was neither of these. She had a heart to feel, and deeply too; but she knew that labour was her destiny, and that when "want came in at the door, love escapes by the window." So she

just laboured, laughed, ate, drank, and slept, very much like other people. Yet few sailors came to the place whom she did not question about Thomas; and many a time and oft did she retire to the rocks of a Sabbath eve, to think of and pray for Thomas Laing. People imagine, from the free and open manner, and talk of the fisher-women, that they are all or generally people of doubtful morality. Never was there a greater mistake. To the public in general they are inaccessible; they almost universally intermarry with one another; and there are fewer cases (said my reverend informant) of public or sessional reproof in Cellardykes, than in any other district of my parish. But, from the precarious and somewhat solitary nature of their employment, they are exceedingly superstitious; and I had access to know, that many a sly sixpence passed from Sally's pocket into old Effie the wise woman's, with the view of having the cards cut and cups read for poor Thomas.

Time, however, passed on—with time came, but did not pass misfortune. Sally's father, who had long been addicted, at intervals, to hard drinking, was found one morning dead at the bottom of a cliff, over which, in returning home inebriated, he had tumbled. There were now three sisters, all below twelve, to provide for, and Sally's mother had long been almost bedrid with severe and chronic rheumatism; consequently, the burden of supporting this helpless family devolved upon Sarah, who was now in the bloom and in the strength of her womanhood. Instead of sitting down, however, to lament what could not be helped, Sarah immediately redoubled her diligence. She even learned to row a boat as well as a man, and contrived, by the help of the men her father used to employ, to keep his boat still going. Things prospered with her for a while; but, in a sudden storm, wherein five boats perished with all on board, she lost her whole resources. They are

a high-minded people those Cellardyke fishers. The Blacks scorned to come upon the session. The young girls salted herrings, and cried haddocks in small baskets through the village and the adjoining burghs, and Sarah contrived still to keep up a cart for country service. Meanwhile, Sarah became the object of attention through the whole neighbourhood. Though somewhat larger in feature and limb than the Venus de Medicis, she was, notwithstanding, tight, clean, and sunny—her skin white as snow, and her frame a well-proportioned Doric—just such a helpmate as a husband who has to rough it through life might be disposed to select. Captain William M'Guffock, or, as he was commonly called, Big Bill, was the commander of a coasting craft, and a man of considerable substance. True, he was considerably older than Sally, and a widower, but he had no family, and a "bien house to bide in." You see that manse-looking tenement there, on the broad head towards the east—that was Captain M'Guffock's residence when his seafaring avocations did not demand his presence elsewhere. Well, Bill came acourting to Sally; but Sally "looked asclent and unco skeich." Someway or other, whenever she thought of matrimony—which she did occasionally—she at the same time thought of Thomas Laing, and, as she expressed it, her heart *scunnered* at the thought. Consequently, Bill made little progress in his courtship; which was likewise liable to be interrupted, for weeks at a time, by his professional voyages. At last a letter arrived from on board a king's vessel, then lying in Leith Roads, apprising Thomas Laing's relatives that he had died of fever on the West India station. This news affected Sally more than anything which had hitherto happened to her. She shut herself up for two hours in her mother's bedroom, weeping aloud and bitterly, exclaiming, from time to time—"Oh! my Thomas!—my own dearest Thomas! I shall never love man again. I am thine in

life and in death—in time and in eternity!" In vain did the poor bedrid woman try to comfort her daughter. Nature had her way; and, in less than three hours, Sarah Black was again in the streets, following, with a confused but a cheerful look, her ordinary occupation. This grief of Sarah's, had it been well nursed, might well have lasted a twelvemonth; but, luckily for Sarah, and for the labouring classes in general, she had not time to nurse her grief to keep it warm. "Give us this day our daily bread," said a poor helpless mother and three somewhat dependent sisters—and Sarah's exertions were redoubled.

"Oh, what a feelingless woman!" said Mrs. Paterson to me, as Sarah passed her door one day in my presence, absolutely singing—"Oh, what a feelingless woman!—and her father dead, and her mother bedrid, and poor Thomas Laing, whom she made such a fuss about, gone too—and there is she, absolutely singing after all!"

Mrs. Paterson is now Mrs. Robson, having married her second husband just six weeks after the death of the first, whom her improper conduct and unhappy temper contributed first to render miserable here, and at last to convey to the churchyard! Verily (added the worthy clergyman), the heart is deceitful above all things. But what, after all, could poor Sarah do, but marry Will M'Guffock, and thus amply provide, not only for herself, but for her mother and sister? Had Thomas (and her heart heaved at the thought) still been alive, she thought, she never would have brought herself to think of it in earnest; but now that Thomas had long ceased to think of her or of anything earthly, why should she not make a man happy who seemed distractedly in love with her, and at the same time honourably provide for her poor and dependent relatives? In the meantime, the sacramental occasion came round, and I had a private meeting previous to the first communion with Sarah Black. To me, in secret, she laid

open her whole heart as if in the presence of her God; and I found her, though not a well-informed Christian by any means on doctrinal points, yet well disposed and exceedingly humble; in short, I had great pleasure in putting a token into her hand, at which she continued to look for an instant, and then returned it to me. I expressed surprise, at least by my looks. "I fear," said she, "that I am *unworthy;* for I have not told you that I am thinking of marrying a man whom I cannot love, merely to provide for our family. Is not this a sin?—and can I, with an intention of doing what I know to be wrong, safely communicate?" I assured her that, instead of thinking it a sin, I thought her resolution commendable, particularly as the object of her real affection was beyond its reach; and I mention the circumstance to show that there is often much honour, and even delicacy of feeling, natural as well as religious, under very uncongenial circumstances and appearances. Having satisfied her mind on this subject, I had the pleasure to see her at the communion table, conducting herself with much seeming seriousness of spirit. I could see her shed tears, and formed the very best opinion of her from her conduct throughout.

In a few days or weeks after this, the proclamation lines were put into my hands, and I had the pleasure of uniting her to Captain M'Guffock in due course. They had, however, only been married a few weeks, when an occurrence of a very awkward character threw her and her husband, who was, in fact, an ill-tempered, passionate man, into much perplexity. The captain was absent on a coasting voyage, as usual; and his wife was superintending the washing of some clothes, whilst the sun was setting. It was a lovely evening in the month of July, and the fishing boats were spread out all over the mouth of the Firth, from the East Neuk to the Isle of May, in the same manner in which you see them at present. Mrs. M'Guffock's

mind assumed, notwithstanding the glorious scenery around her, a serious cast, for she could not help recalling many such evenings in which she had rejoiced in company and in unison with her beloved Thomas. She felt and knew that it was wrong to indulge such emotions; but she could not help it. At last, altogether overcome, she threw herself forward on the green turf, and prayed audibly—"O my God, give me strength and grace to forget my own truly beloved Thomas! Alas! he knows not the struggles which I have to exclude him from my sinful meditations. Even suppose he were again to arise from the dead, and appear in all the reality of his youthful being, I must, and would fly from him as from my most dangerous foe." She lifted up her eyes in the twilight, and in the next instant felt herself in the arms of a powerful person, who pressed her in silence to his breast. Amazed and bewildered, she neither screamed nor fainted, but, putting his eager kisses aside, calmly inquired who he was who dared thus to insult her. She had no sooner pronounced the inquiry, than she heard the words, "Thomas—your own Thomas!" pronounced in tones which could not be mistaken. This, indeed, overpowered her; and, with a scream of agony, she sank down dead on the earth. This brought immediate assistance; but she was found lying by herself, and talking wildly about her Thomas Laing. Everybody who heard her concluded that she had either actually seen her lover's ghost, or that her mind had given way under the pressure of regret for her marriage, and that she was now actually a lunatic. For twelve hours she continued to evince the most manifest marks of insanity; but sleep at last soothed and restored her, and she immediately sent for me. I endeavoured to persuade her that it must be all a delusion, and that the imagination oftentimes created such fancies. I gave instances from books which I had read, as well as from a particular friend of my own who

had long been subject to such delusive impressions, and at last she became actually persuaded that there had been no reality in what she had so vividly perceived, and still most distinctly and fearfully recollected. I took occasion then to urge upon her the exceeding sinfulness of allowing any image to come betwixt her and her lawful married husband; and left her restored, if not to her usual serenity, at least to a conviction that she had only been disturbed by a vision.

When her husband returned, I took him aside, and explained my views of the case, and stated my most decided apprehension that some similar impression might return upon her nerves, and that her sisters (her mother being now removed by death) should dwell in the same house with her. To this, however, the captain objected, on the score that, though he was willing to pay a person to take care of them in their own house, he did not deem them proper company, in short, for a *captain's wife*. I disliked the reasoning, and told him so; but he became passionate, and I saw it was useless to contend further. From that day, however, Bill M'Guffock seemed to have become an altered man. Jealousy, or something nearly resembling it, took possession of his heart; and he even ventured to affirm that his wife had a paramour somewhere concealed, with whom, in his long and necessary absences, she associated. He alleged, too, that in her sleep she would repeat the name of her favourite, and in terms of present love and fondness. I now saw that I had not known the depth of "a first love," otherwise I should not have advised this unhappy marriage, all advantageous as it was in a worldly point of view. A sailor's life, however, is one of manifest risk, and in less than a twelvemonth Sarah M'Guffock was a young widow, without incumbrance, and with her rights to her just share of the captain's effects. Her sorrow for the death of her husband was, I believe,

sincere; but I observed that she took an early opportunity of joining her sisters in her old habitation, immediately beneath that still tenanted by the friends of Laing.

Matters were in this situation, when I was surprised one evening, whilst sitting meditating in the manse of Kilrenny, about dusk, with a visit from a tall and well-dressed stranger. He asked me at once if I could give him a private interview for a few minutes, as he had something of importance to communicate. Having taken him into my study, and shut the door, I reached him a chair, and desired him to proceed.

"I had left the parish," said the stranger, "before you were minister of Kilrenny, in the time of worthy Mr. Brown, and therefore you will probably not know even my name. I am Thomas Laing!"

"I did not indeed," said I, "know you, but I have heard much about you; and I know one who has taken but too deep an interest in your fate. But how comes it," added I, beginning to think that I was conversing either with a vision or an impostor—"how comes it that you are here, seemingly alive and well, whilst we have all been assured of your death some years ago?"

The stranger started, and immediately exclaimed—"Dead!—dead!—who said I was dead?"

"Why," said I, "there was a letter came, I think, to your own father, mentioning your death by fever in the West Indies."

"Do I look like a dead man?" said the stranger; but, immediately becoming absent and embarrassed, he sat for a while silent, and then resumed:—"Some one," said he, "has imposed upon my dear Sarah, and for the basest of purposes. I now see it all. My dear girl has been sadly used."

"This is, indeed, strange," said I; "but let me hear how it is that I have the honour of a visit from you at this time and in this place?"

"Oh," replied Thomas Laing (for it was he in verity), "I will soon give you the whole story:—

"When I left this, fourteen years ago come the time, I embarked at Greenock, working my way out to New York. As I was an excellent hand at a rope and an oar, I early attracted the captain's notice, who made some inquiries respecting my place of birth and my views in life. I told him that I was literally "at sea," having nothing particularly in view—that I had been bred a fisher, and understood sailing and rowing as well as any one on board. The captain seemed to have something in his head, for he nodded to me, saying, 'Very well, we will see what can be done for you when we arrive at New York.' When we were off Newfoundland, we were overtaken by a terrible storm, which drove us completely out of our latitude, till, at last, we struck on a sandbank—the sea making for several hours a complete breach over the deck. Many were swept away into the devouring flood; whilst some of us—amongst several others the captain and myself—clung to what remained of the ship's masts till the storm somewhat abated. We then got the boat launched, and made for land, which we could see looming at some distance ahead. We got, however, entangled amongst currents and breakers; and, within sight of a boat which was making towards us from the shore, we fairly upset—and I remember nothing more till I awoke, in dreadful torment, in some fishermen's boat. Beside me lay the captain, the rest had perished. When we arrived at the land, we were placed in one of the fishermen's huts, where we were most kindly treated—assisting, as we did occasionally, in the daily labours of the cod fishery. I displayed so much alertness and skill in this employment, that the factor on the station made me an advantageous offer, if I would remain with them and assist in their labours. With this offer, having no other object distinctly in view, I complied.

But my kind and good-hearted captain, possessing less dexterity in this employment, was early shipped at his own request for England. The most of the hands, about two hundred in all, on the station where I remained, were Scotch and Irish, and a merry, jovial set we were. The men had wives and families; and the governor or factor lived in a large slated house, very like your manse, upon a gentle eminence, a little inland. Towards the coast the land is sandy and flat; but in the interior there is much wood, a very rich soil, and excellent fresh water. Where we remained the water was brackish, and constituted the chief inconvenience of our station. The factor or agent, commonly called by the men the governor, used to visit us almost every day, and remained much on board when ships were loading for Europe. One fine summer's day we were all enjoying the luxury of bathing, when, all on a sudden, the shout was raised—'A shark! a shark!' I had just taken my place in the boat, and was still undressed, when I observed one man disappear, being dragged under the water by the sea monster. The factor, who was swimming about in the neighbourhood, seemed to be paralyzed by terror, for he made for the boat, plashing like a dog, with his hands and arms frequently stretched out of the water. I saw his danger, and immediately plunged in to his rescue, which, with some difficulty, I at last effected.

"Poor Pat Moonie was seen no more; nor did the devouring monster reappear. The factor immediately acknowledged his obligations to me, by carrying me home with him, and introducing me to his lady and an only daughter—I think I never beheld a more beautiful creature; but I looked upon her as a being of a different order from myself, and I still thought of my own dear Sally and sweet home at Cellardykes. Through the factor's kindness, I got the management of a boat's crew, with considerable

emolument which belonged to the situation. I then behoved to dress better, at least while on land, than I used to do, and I was an almost daily visitor at Codfield House, the name of the captain's residence. My affairs prospered; I made, and had no way of spending money. The factor was my banker, and his fair daughter wrote out the acknowledgments for her father to sign. One beautiful Sabbath-day, after the factor—who officiated at our small station as clergyman—had read us prayers and a sermon, I took a walk into the interior of the country, where, with a book in her hand, and an accompaniment of Newfoundland dogs, I chanced to meet with Miss Woodburn, the factor's beautiful child. She was only fourteen, but quite grown, and as blooming a piece of womanhood as ever wore kid gloves or black leather. She seemed somewhat embarrassed at my presence, and blushed scarlet, entreating me to prevent one of her dogs from running away with her glove, which he was playfully tossing about in his mouth. The dog would not surrender his charge to any one but to his mistress; and, in the struggle, he bit my hand somewhat severely. You may see the marks of his teeth there still" (holding out his hand while he spoke). "Poor Miss Woodburn knew not what to do first; she immediately dropped the book which she was reading—scolded the offending dog to a distance—took up the glove, which the dog at her bidding had dropped, and wrapped it close and firmly around my bleeding hand; a band of long grass served for thread to make all secure, and in a few days my hand was in a fair way of recovery—but not so my heart; I felt as if I had been all at once transformed into a gentleman—the soft touch of Miss Eliza's fair fingers seemed to have transformed me, skin, flesh, and bones, into another species of being. I shook like an aspen leaf whenever I thought of our interesting interview; and I could observe that Eliza changed colour, and looked out of the window

whenever I entered the room. But, sir, I am too particular, and I will now hasten to a close." I entreated him (said the parson) to go on in his own way, and without any reference to my leisure. He then proceeded:—"Well, sir, from year to year I prospered, and from year to year got more deeply in love with the angel which moved about in my presence. At last our attachment became manifest to the young lady's parent; and, to my great surprise, it was proposed that we should make a voyage to New York, and there be united in matrimony. All this while, sir, I thought of my own dear Sally, and the thought not unfrequently made me miserable; but what was Sally to me now?—perhaps she was dead—perhaps she was married—perhaps—but I could scarcely think it—she had forgot me; and then the blooming rosebud was ever in my presence, and hallowed me, by its superior purity and beauty, into a complete gentleman. Well, married we were at New York, and for several months I was the happiest of men, and my dear wife (I know it) the happiest of women; but the time of her labour approached—and child and mother lie buried in the cemetery at New York, where we had now fixed our residence." (Here poor Thomas wept plentifully, and, after a pause, proceeded.)—"I could not reside longer in a place which was so dismally associated in my mind; so, having wound up my worldly affairs, and placed my little fortune—about one thousand pounds—in the bank, I embarked for Europe, along with my father and mother-in-law, who were going home to end their days in the place of their nativity, Belfast, in Ireland. I determined upon landing at the Cove of Cork, to visit once more my native village, and to have at least one interview with Sally. I learned, on my arrival at Largo, that Sally was married to the old captain. I resolved, however, ere I went finally to settle in Belfast, to have one stolen peep at my first love—my own

dear Sally. I came upon her whilst repeating my name in her prayers—I embraced her convulsively—repeated her name twice in her hearing—heard her scream—saw her faint—kissed her fondly again and again—and, strangers appearing, I immediately absconded."

"This," said the minister, "explains all;—but go on—I am anxious to hear the conclusion of your somewhat eventful history."

"Why, I was off immediately for Belfast, where I at present reside with my father-in-law, whose temper, since the loss of his child, has been much altered for the worse. But I am here on a particular errand, in which your kind offices, sir—for I have heard of your goodness of heart—may be of service to me. I observed the death of the old captain in the newspaper, and I am here once more to enjoy an interview with his widow. I wish you, sir, to break the business to her; meanwhile, I will lodge at the Old Inn, Mrs. Laing's, at Anstruther, and await your return."

I agreed (continued the parson of Kilrenny) to wait upon the widow; and to see, in fact, how the wind set, in regard to "first love." I found her, as I expected, neatly clad in her habiliments of widowhood, and employed in making some dresses for a sister's marriage. I asked and obtained a private interview, when I detailed, as cautiously as I could, the particulars of Thomas Laing's history. I could observe that her whole frame shook occasionally, and that tears came, again and again, into her eyes. I was present, but a fortnight ago, at their first interview at the inn; and I never saw two human beings evince more real attachment for each other. On their bended knees, and with faces turned towards heaven, did they unite in thanking God that he had permitted them to have another interview with each other in this world of uncertainty and death. It has been since discovered that the letter announcing Laing's death was a forgery of the old captain,

which has reconciled his widow very much to the idea of shortening her days of mourning. In a word, this evening, and in a few hours, I am going to unite the widower and the widowed, together with a younger sister and a fine young sailor, in the holy bonds of matrimony; and, as a punishment for your giving me all this trouble in narrating this story, I shall insist upon your eating fresh herring, with the fresh-herring Presbytery of St. Andrew's, which meets here at Mrs. Laing's to-day, and afterwards witnessing the double ceremony.

To this I assented, and certainly never spent an evening more agreeably than that which I divided betwixt the merry lads of St. Andrew's Presbytery, and the fair dames and maidens of Cellardykes, who graced the marriage ceremony. Such dancing as there was, and such screaming, and such music, and such laughing; yet, amidst it all, Mr. and Mrs. Laing preserved that decent decorum, which plainly said, "We will not mar the happiness of the young; but we feel the goodness and providence of our God too deeply, to permit us to join in the noisy part of the festivity."

"The fair maid of Cellardykes," with her kind-hearted husband—I may mention, for the satisfaction of my fair readers in particular—may now be seen daily at their own door, and in their own garden, on the face of the steep which overlooks the village. They have already lived three years in complete happiness, and have been blessed with two as fine healthy children as a Cellardykes sun ever rose upon. Mr. Laing has become an elder in the church, and both husband and wife are most exemplary in the discharge of their religious, as well as relative duties. God has blessed them with an ample competence; and sure is the writer of this narrative, that no poor fisherman or woman ever applied to this worthy couple without obtaining relief.

One circumstance more, and my narrative closes. As Mr. Laing was one evening taking a walk along the sea-shore, viewing the boats as they mustered for the herring fishing, he was shot at from behind one of the rocks, and severely wounded in the shoulder—the ball or slug-shot having lodged in the clavicle, and refusing, for some days, to be extracted. The hue-and-cry was immediately raised; but the guilty person was nowhere to be seen. He had escaped in a boat, or had hid himself in a crevice of the rock, or in some private and friendly house in the village. Poor Thomas Laing was carried home to his distracted wife more dead than alive; and Dr. Goodsir being called, disclosed that, in his present state, the lead could not be extracted. Poor Sarah was never a moment from her husband's side, who fevered, and became occasionally delirious—talking incoherently of murder and shipwreck, and Woodburn, and love, and marriage, and Sarah Black. All within his brain was one mad wheel of mixed and confused colours, such as children make when they wheel a stick, dyed white, black, and red, rapidly around. Suspicion, from the first, fell upon the brother of the boy Rob Paterson, whom Laing had killed many years before. Revenge is the most enduring, perhaps, of all the passions, and rather feeds upon itself than decays. Like fame, "it acquires strength by time;" and it was suspected that Dan Paterson, a reckless and a dissipated man, had done the deed. In confirmation of this supposition, Dan was nowhere to be found, and it was strongly suspected that his wife and his son, who returned at midnight with the boat, had set Dan on shore somewhere on the coast, and that he had effected his escape. Death, for some time, seemed every day and hour nearer at hand; but at last the symptoms softened, the fever mitigated, the swelling subsided, and, after much careful and skilful surgery, most admirably conducted by Dr. Goodsir's son, the ball was extracted.

The wound closed without mortification; and, in a week or two, Mr. Laing was not only out of danger, but out of bed, and walking about, as he does to this hour, with his arm in a sling. It was about the period of his recovery, that Dan Paterson was taken as he was skulking about in the west country, apparently looking out for a ship in which to sail to America. He was immediately brought back to Cellardykes, and lodged in Anstruther prison. Mr. Laing would willingly have forborne the prosecution; but the law behoved to have its course. Dan was tried for "maiming with the intention of murder," and was condemned to fourteen years' transportation. This happened in the year 1822, the year of the King's visit to Scotland. Mr. and Mrs. Laing actually waited upon his Majesty King George the Fourth, at the palace of Dalkeith, and, backed by the learned judge and counsel, obtained a commutation of the punishment, from banishment to imprisonment for a limited period. The great argument in his favour was the provocation he had received. Dan Paterson now inhabits a neat cottage in the village, and Mr. Laing has quite set him up with a boat of his own, ready rigged and fitted for use. He has entirely reformed, has become a member of a temperance society, and his wife and family are as happy as the day is long. Mr. and Mrs. Laing are supplied with the very best of fish, and stockings and mittens are manufactured by the Patersons for the little Laings, particularly during boisterous weather, when fishing is out of the question. Thus has a wise Providence made even the wrath of man to praise him. The truth of the above narrative may be tested any day, by waiting upon the Rev. Mr. Dickson, or upon the parties themselves at Braehead of Cellardykes.

PRESCRIPTION;

OR, THE 29TH OF SEPTEMBER.

THE serene calmness and holy inspiration of some of our cottage retreats in Scotland are often the envy of the town-poet or philosopher, who looks upon the sequestered spots as possessing all the beauty and repose of the beatific Beulah, where the feet of the pilgrim found repose, and his spirit rest. The desire arises out of that discontent which, less or more, is the inheritance of man in this sphere; it is the residuum of the worldly feelings which, like the clay that, in inspired hands, gave the power of sight to the blind, opens the eyes to immortality. The wish for retirement belongs to good, if it is not a part of the great principle that inclines us to look far away to purer regions for the rest which is never disturbed, and the joy that knows no abatement. Yet how vain are often our thoughts as we survey the white-washed hut in the valley, covered with honeysuckle and white roses; the plot before the door; the croonin dame on her tripod; the lass with the lint-white locks, singing, in snatches of Nature's own language, her purest feelings, like the swelling of a mountain spring! The heart is not still there, any more than in the crowded mart. The birds whistle, but they die too; the rose blooms, but it is eaten in the heart by the palmer worm; the sun shines, but there is a shade at his back. Alas for mortal aspirations—there is nothing here of one side. Like the two parties who fought for the truth of the two pleas—that the statue was white, or that it was black—we find, after all our labour lost, that one side is of the one colour, and the other of the opposite. These thoughts

arise in us at this moment, as we recollect the little cottage of Homestead, situated in a collateral valley on the Borders. We were born at a stone-cast from it; and, even in the dream of age, see issuing from it, or entering it, a creature who might have stood for Wordsworth's Highland Girl—a slender, gracile thing, retiring and modest; as delicate in her feelings as in the hue of her complexion; her thoughts of her glen and waterfall only natural to her —all others, fearful even to herself, glenting forth through a flushed medium, which equally betrayed the workings of the blood in the transparent veins—a being of young life, elasticity, and sensitiveness, such as, like some modest flower, we find only in certain recesses of the valleys in mountain-lands. Such were you, Alice Scott, when you first darted across our path on the hills. We have said that we see you now through the dream of age; and, holding to the parallel, there is a change o'er the mood of our vision, for we see you again in a form like that of "The Ladye Geraldine"—your mountain russets off; the bandeau that bound the flying locks laid aside; the irritability and flush of the young spirit abated; and, instead of these, the gown of silk, the coif of satin, and the slow and dignified step of conscious worth and superiority. And whence this change?

The young female we have thus apostrophised, was the daughter of Adam Scott, a cottar, who occupied the small cottage of Homestead, under the proprietor of Whitecraigs —a fine property, lying to the south of the cottage; and the mansion of which is yet to be seen by the traveller who seeks the Tweed by the windings of the river Lyne. Old Adam died, and left his widow and daughter to the protection of his superior, Mr. Hayston, who, recollecting the services and stanch qualities of his tenant, did not despise the charge. The small bield was allowed to the mother and daughter, rent free; and some assistance, in addition

to the produce of their hands, enabled them to live as thousands in this country live, whose capability of supporting life might be deemed a problem difficult of solution by those whose only care is how to destroy God's gifts. Nature is as curious in her disposal of qualities as the great genius of chance or convention is of the distribution of means. Literature has worn out the characteristic and gloomy lines of the description of the fair and the good; and the impatience of the mind of the nineteenth century —a mind greedy of caricature, and regardless of written sentiment—may warn us from the portrayment of what people now like better to see than to read or hear of. Away, then, with the usual terms, and let old Dame Scott and her daughter be deemed as of those beings who have interested you in the quiet recesses of humble poverty, where Nature, as if in sport or satire, loves to play fantastic tricks. If you have no living models to go by, call up some of the pages of the thousand volumes that have been multiplied on a subject which has been more spoiled by poetical imagery, than benefited by sober observation.

Within about five years of the death of the husband and father, old Hayston died, and left Whitecraigs to his only son, Hector, who was kind enough to continue the gift of the father to the inmates of Homestead; but he loaded them with a condition, unspoken, yet implied. The young laird and the pretty cottage maiden had foregathered often amidst the romantic scenes on the Lyne; and that which Nature probably intended as a guard and a mean of segregation—the shrinking timidity of her own mountain child, when looked upon by the eye of, to her, aristocracy—only tended to an opposite effect. A poet has compared love to an Eastern bird, which loses all its beauty when it flies; and it is as true as it is a pretty conceit; but if there was any feathered creature whose wings, reflecting, from its mohaul tints, the sun in greater splendour, when on the

wing, it would supply as applicable and not less poetical an emblem of the object of the little god's heart-stirrings; and so it seemed to the young laird of Whitecraigs, that, as Alice Scott bounded away over the green hills, or down by the Lyne banks, at his approach, her flight added to the interest which she had already inspired when she had no means of escape. But, as the wildest doe may be caught and tamed, so was she, who was as a white one removed from the herd. The young man possessed attractions beside those of imputed wealth and station; and probably, though we mean not to be severe upon the sex, the process by which his affection had been increased was reversed in its effects upon her, to whom assiduous seeking was as the assiduous retreating had been to him.

Yet all was, we believe, honourable in the intentions of young Hayston; and, as for Alice, she was in the primeval condition of a total unconsciousness of evil. The "one blossom on earth's tree," as the poet has it, was by her yet unplucked, nor knew she how many thousands have had cause to sing—

> "I have plucked the one blossom that hangs on earth's tree;
> I have lived—I have loved, and die."

Her former timidity was the *à priori* proof of the strength of the feeling that followed, when the sensitiveness of fear gave way to confidence. Town loves are a thing of sorry account: the best of them are a mere preference of the one to the many; and he who is fortunate enough to outshine his rivals, may pride himself in the possession of some superior recommendations which have achieved a triumph. Were he to look better to it, he might detect something, too, in the force of resources. At best, a few hundred pounds will turn the scale; for he is by all that a better man; and the trained eye of town beauties has a strange responsive twinkle in the glare of the one thing needful. In the remote and beautiful parts of a romantic country,

things are otherwise ordered: affection there, is as the mountain flower to the gallipot rose; and it is a mockery to tell us that the difference is only perceptible to those who are weak enough to be romantic. A doughty warrior would recognise and acknowledge the difference, and fight a great deal better too, after he had blubbered over a mountain or glen born love for a creature who would look upon him as the soul of the retreat, and hang on his breast in the outpourings of Nature's feelings. That young Whitecraigs appreciated the triumph he had secured, there can be no reason to doubt. He had been within the drying atmosphere of towns, and had sung and waltzed, probably, with a round hundred of creatures who understood the passion, much as Audrey understood poetry—deeming it honest enough, but yet a composition made up of the elements of side glances, arias, smorzando-sighs, and quadrilles. With Alice Scott on his bosom, the quiet glen as their retreat, the green umbrageous woods their defence, its birds as their musicians, and the wimpling Lyne as the speaking Naiad, he forgot, if he did not despise, the scenes he had left. She flew from him now no longer. The fowler had succeeded to captivate, not intentionally to kill.

Two years passed over in this intercourse. There was no secret about it. The dame was well apprised of their proceeding; and the open frankness of the youth dispelled all the fears of wrong which the innocence of the daughter, undefended by experience, might have scarcely guaranteed to one who, at least, had heard something of the ways of the world. The income from Whitecraigs, somewhere about seven hundred a-year, was more than sufficient for the expenditure of the older Haystons; and Hector, at this time, did not seem inclined to alter the line of life followed by his fathers. He had not spoken of marriage to the mother; but he had not hesitated to breathe into the ear of Alice all that was necessary to lead her to the conclusion,

to which her heart jumped, that she was to be the lady of the stately white mansion that, at one time, had appeared to her as a great temple where humble worshippers of the glen and the wood might not lay their sandals at the doorway. She had entered the vestibule only as an alms-seeker, and trembled to think she might have been observed throwing a side glance into the interior, where pier-glasses might have reflected the form of the russet-clad child of the valley and hill. The tale has been told a thousand times, and the world is not mended by it. The young master pressed her to his bosom, imprinted a kiss, and was away into the mazes of life in the metropolis, whither some affairs, left unsettled by his father, carried him. Six months passed away, and the rents of the succeeding term were collected by Mr. Pringle, the agent of the family, in Peebles. There was no word for poor Alice, though the small allowance was handed in by the agent, who, ignorant of the state of matters between the young couple, informed the mother that the master of Whitecraigs was on the eve of being married to a young lady of some wealth in the metropolis. The statement was heard by the daughter; and what henceforth but that of Thekla's song :—

> "The clouds are flying, the woods are sighing—
> The maiden is walking the grassy shore;
> And as the wave breaks with might, with might,
> She singeth aloud through the darksome night;
> But a tear is in her troubled eye."

Alice Scott was changed; yet, who shall tell what that change was? If the slow and even progress of the spirit may defy the eye of the metaphysician, who may describe its moods of disturbance? Poetry is familiar with these things, and we have fair rhymes to tell us of the wanderings, and the lonely musings by mountain streams, and the eye that looks and sees not, and the wasting form, and the words that come like the sounds from deep caves; yet,

after all, they tell us but little, and that little is but to tickle us with the resonance of spoken sentiment, leaving the sad truth as little understood as before. True it was, that Alice Scott did all these things, and more too: the charm of the hills and the water banks was gone: the light spirit that carried her along, as if borne on the winds, was quenched; the songs by which she gladdened the ears of her mother, as she plied her portable handwork on the green, was no more heard mingling its notes with the music of the Lyne; and the face that shone transparently, like painted alabaster, as if part of the light came from within, was as the poet says—

"Like an April morn
Clad in a wintry cloud."

Nor did additional time seem to possess any power save that of increasing the pain of the heart-stroke. Most of the griefs of mortals have their appointed modes of alleviation—some are complaining griefs, some are talkative, and some sorrows are sociable for selfishness. But the heart-wound of her who has only those scenes of nature which were associated with the image of the unkind one, to wear off the impressions of which, under other hues, they form a part, is a silent mourner. There is enough of a painful eloquence around her, and her voice would be only the small whisper that is lost in the wailings of the storm in the glen. Yet painful as the language is, she courts it in silence, even while it mixes and blends with the poison which consumes her. It was in vain that her mother, who saw with a parental eye the malady which is the best understood by those of her class and age, urged her with kindness to betake herself to her household duties. She was seldom to be prevailed upon to remain within doors; the hill-side, or the bosom of the glen, or the back of the willows by the water-side, were her choice. Ordinary meal times were forgotten or unheeded, where

Nature had renounced her cravings, or given all her energies to the heart.

The next intelligence received at Homestead was that of the marriage of Hector Hayston, and his departure for France. The servants at Whitecraigs were discharged, as if there had been no expectation, for a long period, of the return of the young laird. The supply to the two females was increased, and paid by Mr. Pringle, who, now probably aware of the situation of Alice, delicately avoided any allusion to his employer. Report, however, was busy with her tales; and the absence of the youth was attributed to the workings of conscience or of shame. There was little truth in the report. The object of his first affections might easily have been banished from Whitecraigs, and he who had been guilty of leaving her may be supposed capable of removing her from scenes which could only add to her sorrow. A true solution of his conduct might have been found in the fact, that Hayston was now following his pleasures in the society of his wife's friends—a gay and lavish circle—and did not wish to detract from his enjoyment by adding banishment and destitution to a wrong now irremediable. Little more was heard of him for some time, with the exception of a floating report, that he had borrowed, through his agent, the sum of ten thousand pounds from a Mr. Colville, a neighbouring proprietor, and pledged to him Whitecraigs in security. The circumstance interested greatly the neighbouring proprietors, who shook their heads in significant augury of the probable fate of their young neighbour in the whirlpool of continental life. Yet the allowance to Dame Scott at the next term was regularly paid; and if there was a tear in her eye, as she looked, first at the money, and then at the thin, pallid creature who sat silent at the window, it was not that she dreaded its discontinuance from the result of the extravagance of the giver. The effect of the act of payment of the money

had, on a former occasion, been noticed by Pringle on the conduct of Alice: it was on this occasion repeated. She rose from her seat, looked steadfastly for a moment at the gift as it lay on the table, placed her hand on her forehead, and flitted out of the room. The eye of the agent followed her from the window: her step was hurried, without an object of impulse. She might go—but whither? probably she knew not herself; yet on she sped till she was lost among the trees on the edge of the glen.

Thus longer time passed, but there seemed no change to Alice, save in the continual decrease of the frame, under the pressure of a mind that communed with the past, and only looked to the future as containing some day that would witness the termination of her sorrows. The anglers on the Lyne became familiar with her figure, for they had seen it on the heights, with her garments floating in the breeze, and had come up to her as she sat by the water-side, but they passed on. At the worst she could be but one whose spirit was not settled enough to admit of her according with the ways of honest maidens; and they might regret that the beauty that still lurked amidst the ravages of the disease of the heart, had not been turned to better account. It is thus that one part of mankind surveys another: they form their theory of a condition whose secret nature is only known to its possessor; draw their moral from false premises, formed as a compliment to their own conduct and situation, and pass on to their pleasure.

Yet there occurred an important exception to these remarks:—One day Alice had taken up her seat on the banks of a small pond in front of the house of Whitecraigs. She sat opposite to the front of the dwelling, and seemed to survey its closed windows and deserted appearance, with the long grass growing up through the gravel of the walks—the broken pailings and decayed out-houses; a scene that

might be supposed to harmonize with the feelings of a mind broken and desolate. There might seem even a consanguinity in the causes of the condition of both. The scene might have suited the genius of a Danby. There was no living creature to disturb the silence. The house of faded white, among the dark trees, cheerless and forsaken; the face of Alice Scott emaciated and pale, with the lustre of the loch, shining in the sun, reflected on it, directed towards the habitation of which she should have been mistress; her eyes, which had forgotten the relief of tears, fixed on the scene so pregnant with unavailing reminiscences—with these we would aid the artist.

But the charm was gone, as a voice sounded behind her. She started, and, according to her custom, would have fled as the hare that remembers the snare; but she was detained. A man, advanced in years, poorly clad, with hair well smitten with snow tints, and a staff in his hand, stood beside her, holding her by the skirt of the gown.

"I am weary," said he; "I have walked from Moffat, and would sit here for a time, if you would speak to me of the scenes and people of these parts." And the application of his hand again to her gown secured a compliance, dictated more by fear than inclination. She sat, while she trembled. "You are fair," continued he; "but my experience of sorrow tells me that grief has been busier with your young heart than years. I will not pry into your secrets. To whom does Whitecraigs now belong?"

The name had not been breathed by her to mortal since that day she had heard of the intended marriage. She made an effort to pronounce it, failed, and fixed her eyes on the pond. The stranger gazed on her, waiting for her reply.

"Hector Hayston," she at length muttered.

"And why has he left so fair a retreat to the desolation that has overtaken it?" rejoined he again. The question

was still more unfortunate. She had no power to reply. Her face was turned from him, and repressed breathings heaved her bosom. "You may tell me, then, if one Dame Scott lives in these parts?" he said again, as he marked her strange manner, and probably augured that his prior question was fraught with pain.

"Yes—yes," she replied, with a sudden start, as if relieved from pain, while she regained her feet; "yonder lives my mother."

The stranger stood with his eyes fixed upon her, as if in deep scrutiny of the inexplicable features of her character and appearance; but he added not a word, till he saw her move as if she wished to be gone.

"You will go with me?" he said.

But the words were scarcely uttered, when she was away through the woods, leaving him to seek his way to the house of her mother, whither, accordingly, he directed his steps, from some prior knowledge he possessed of the locality about which he had been making inquiries. As he went along, he seemed wrapt in meditation—again and again looking back, to endeavour to get another sight of the girl, who was now seated on the edge of the stream, and again seized by some engrossing thought that claimed all the energies of his spirit. On coming up to the door of the cottage, he tapped gently with his long staff; and, upon being required by the dame to enter, he passed into the middle of the floor, and stood and surveyed the house and its inmate.

"I have nothing for you," said the latter; "so you must pass on to those whom God has ordained as the distributors of what the needy require. Alas! I am myself but a beggar."

The words seemed to have been wrung out of her by the meditative mood in which the stranger had found her, and, whether it was that the interest which had been ex-

cited in him by the appearance of the daughter had been increased by the confession of the mother, or that there was some secret cause working in his mind, he passed his hand over his eyes, and for a moment turned away his head.

"I have been both a beggar and a giver in my day," he replied, as he laid down his hat and staff, and took a chair opposite to the dame; "and I am weary of the one character and of the other. I have got with a curse; and I have given for ingratitude. But I may here give, and you may receive, without either. There is an unoccupied bed; I am weary of wandering, and have enough to pay for rest."

"That is better than charity," rejoined the dame—"ay, even the charity of the stranger."

"And why of the *stranger*, dame?" added he. "I have hitherto thought that the charity of *friends* was that which might be most easily borne. And who may be your benefactor?"

"Hector Hayston of Whitecraigs," replied she, hanging her head, and drawing a deep breath.

The stranger detected the same symptoms of pain in the mother as those he had observed in the daughter.

"Then forgets he not his cottars in his absence," he added. "But why has he left a retreat fairer than any I have yet seen throughout a long pilgrimage over many lands?"

"We will not speak of that," she replied, rising slowly, and going to the window, where she stood for a time in silence.

"You have a daughter, dame," resumed the man, as he watched the indications of movement in the heart of the mother. "I saw her sitting looking at the mansion of Whitecraigs. I fear she can lend you small aid; yet, if her powers of mind and body were equal to the beauty that has too clearly faded from her cheeks, methinks you

would have had small need to have taken the charity of either friends or strangers."

"Ay, poor Alice! poor Alice!" rejoined the mother, turning suddenly, and applying her hand to something which required not her care at that time—"Ay, poor Alice!" she added.

"Is it a bargain, then," said he, wishing to retreat from a subject that so evidently pained her, "that I may remain here for a time, on your own terms of remuneration?"

"It may be as you say," replied she, again taking her seat; "but only on a condition."

"What is it?" inquired he.

"That you never mention the name of Hector Hayston, or of Whitecraigs, while Alice is by. She harms no one; and I would not see her harmed."

"I perceive," said he, muttering to himself, "that I am not the only one in the world who carries in his bosom a secret. But," he continued, in a louder tone, "your condition, dame, shall be fulfilled; and now I may hold myself to be your lodger." And he proceeded to take from the stuffed pockets of his coat some night-clothes of a homely character, and handed them to the dame. "And now," he said, "you may be, now or after, wondering who he may be who has thus come, like a weary bird from the waste that seeks refuge among the sere leaves, to live in the habitation of sorrow. But you must question me not; and farther than my name, which is Wallace, you may know nothing of me till after the 29th day of September—ay, ay," he continued, as if calculating, "the 29th day of September."

The dame started as she heard the mention of the day, looked steadfastly at him, and was silent.

"Yes," he continued, "that day past, and I will once more draw my breath freely in the land of my fathers; and my foot, which has only bowed the head of the

heather-bell in the valley, may yet collect energy enough from my unstrung nerves to press fearlessly the sod of the mountain. How long is it since your husband died?"

"Seven years," replied she.

"Well, short as our acquaintance has yet been," said he, "our words have been only of unpleasant things. Now, I require refreshment; and here is some small pay in advance, to remove the ordinary prejudice against strangers. We shall be better acquainted by times. I will take, now, what is readiest in the house; for you may guess, from my attire, that I have been accustomed to that fare by which the poor contrive to spin out the weary term of their pilgrimage."

So much being arranged, the dame set about preparing a meal; and Mr. Wallace, as he had called himself, proceeded to transform his staff into a fishing-rod, and arrange his other small matters connected with his future residence. When the humble dish was prepared, the dame went out, and, taking her position on a green tumulus that rose between the cottage and the Lyne, stood, and, placing her hands over her eyes, looked down the water. Her eye, accustomed to the search, detected the form of her daughter far down the stream, and, waving her hand to her, she beckoned her home. But she came not; and the two inmates sat down to their repast.

"This shall be for my poor Alice," said the mother, as she laid aside a portion of the frugal fare; "but she will take it at her own time, or perhaps not at all."

"And yet how much she needs it," added the stranger, "her wasted form and pale face too plainly show."

"There is a sad change there, sir," rejoined she. "There was not a fairer or more gentle creature from Tweedscross to Tweedmouth than Alice Scott; nor did ever the foot of light-hearted innocence pass swifter over the hill or down the glen. You have seen her to-day where she is often to

be seen—by the pond opposite the closed-up house of Whitecraigs—and may wonder to hear how one so wasted may still reach the hill-heads; yet there, too, she is sometimes seen. I have struggled sore to make her what she once was; but in vain. She will wander and wander, and return and wander again; nor will this cease till I some day find her dead body among the seggs of the Lyne, or in the lirk of the hill. When I know you better, I may tell you more. At present, I am eating the bread of one who is more connected with this sad subject than I may now confess; and I have never been accounted ungrateful."

The stranger was moved, and ate his meal in meditative silence. In an hour afterwards, Alice returned to the house, and, as she entered, started as her eye met that of him who had, by his questions, stirred to greater activity the feelings that were already too busy with her heart; but her fears were removed, by his avoidance of the subject which had pained her; and a few hours seemed to have rendered him as indifferent to her as seemed the other objects around her. Some days passed, and the widow would have been as well satisfied with her lodger as he was with her, had it not been that he enjoined secrecy as to his residence in the house—retiring to the spence when any one entered; and if at any time he went along the Lyne in the morning, he avoided those whom he met; and betook himself to private acts in the inner apartment during the day. At times he left the cottage in the evening, and did not return for two days; but whither he went, the inmates knew not. The dame conjectured he had been as far as Peebles; but her reason was merely that he brought newspapers with him, and intelligence of matters transacting there. The secrecy was not suited to the open and simple manners to which she had been accustomed; but she recollected his words, that on the

29th of September, she would know all concerning him. Now these words were connected by a chain of associations that startled her. The 29th of September had been set apart by her deceased husband as a day of prayer. He had never allowed it to pass without an offering of the contrite heart to God; this practice he had continued till his death, and she had witnessed the act repeated for fifteen years. She was no more superstitious than the rest of her class; she was, indeed, probably less so; and her theories, formed for an adequate explanation of the startling coincidence, were probably as philosophical as if they had been formed by reason acting under the astute direction of scepticism. Yet where is the mind, untutored or learned, that can throw away at all times, at all hours—when the heart is in the sunshine of the cheerful day of worldly intercourse, or in the deep shadow of the wing of eternity—all thoughts of all powers save those of natural causes, which are themselves a mystery? We may sport with the subject; but it comes again back on the heart, and we sigh in whispering words of fear, that in the hands of God we are nothing.

One day Mr. Wallace was seated at breakfast; he had been away for two nights; Alice was sitting by the side of the fire, looking into the heart of the red embers, and the mother was superintending the breakfast; he took out a newspaper from his pocket, and, without a word of premonition, read a paragraph in a deep, solemn voice.

"Died at ——— Street, London, Maria Knight, wife of Hector Hayston, Esq., of Whitecraigs, in the county of Peebles, in Scotland."

A peculiar sound struggled in the throat of Alice; but it passed, and she was silent. The mother sat and looked Wallace in the face, to ascertain what construction to put upon the occurrence which he had thus read with an emphasis betokening a greater interest than it might demand

from one, as yet, all but ignorant, as she thought, of the true circumstances of the condition of her daughter. He made no commentary on what he had read; but looking again at the paper, and turning it over, as if searching for some other news, he fixed his eyes on an advertisement in the fourth page. He then read—

"On the 1st day of October next, there will be exposed to public roup and sale, within the Town-Hall of Peebles, by virtue of the powers of sale contained in a mortgage granted by Hector Hayston, Esq., of Whitecraigs, in favour of George Colville of Haughton, all and hail the lands and estate of Whitecraigs, situated in the parish of ———, and shire of Peebles, with the mansion-house, offices, &c."

He then laid down the paper, and, looking the widow full in the face—

"The day of sale of Whitecraigs," said he, "is the *second* day after the 29th of September. It would have been too much had it been on that day itself."

No reply was made to his remark. The announcement called up in the mind of the dame more than she could express; but that which concerned more closely herself, was too apparently veiled with no mystery. The sale of Whitecraigs was the ejection of herself and daughter from Homestead; and she knew not whither she and her daughter were now to be driven, to seek refuge and sustenance from a world from which she had been so long estranged.

"All things come to a termination," she said. "For many years I have lived here, wife and widow; and if I have felt sorrow, I have also enjoyed. The world is wide; and if I may be obliged to ask and to receive charity, the God who moves the hand to give it, may not again—now that His purpose may be served by my contrition—select that of the destroyer of my child. But there is another that must be taken from these haunts;" and, turning to

Alice, whose face was still directed to the fire, she gazed on her hapless daughter, while the tear stole down her cheeks.

Wallace's eye was fixed on the couple. He seemed to understand the allusion of the mother, which indicated plainly enough, that though the hills and glens of Whitecraigs had been the scene of the ruin of her daughter's peace, she anticipated still more fatal consequences from taking her away from them. Meanwhile, Alice, who had listened to and understood all, arose from her seat.

"I will never leave Whitecraigs, mother," she said; and bent her steps towards the door.

"Let her follow her fancy," said Wallace. Then relapsing into a fit of musing, he added—"the 29th of September of this year will soon be of the time that is. For twenty years I have looked forward to that day—under a burning sun, far from my native land, I have sighed for it—in the midnight hour I have counted the years and days that were between. Every anniversary was devoted to the God who has chastened the heart of the sinner; and there was need, when that heart was full of the thoughts inspired by that day, and penitence came on the wings of terror. Now it approaches; and I have not miscalculated the benefits it may pour on other heads than mine."

"Alas!" said the widow, as she cast her eye through the window after her daughter, "there is no appointed day for the termination of the sorrows of that poor creature. To the broken-hearted, one day as another, sunshine or shower, is the same. But what hand shall bear Alice Scott from Whitecraigs?"

"Perhaps none," replied Wallace, as, taking up the newspaper, he retired to an inner apartment, where he usually spent the day. Some hours passed; and, in the afternoon, Mr. Pringle, while passing, took occasion to call at Homestead, and informed the widow that it would be

her duty to look out for another habitation, as Whitecraigs was to be sold by the creditor, Mr. Colville, whose object in granting the loan was, if possible, to take advantage of the difficulties into which extravagance had plunged the young proprietor, and to bring the property into the market, that he might purchase it as an appanage of the old estate of Haughton, from which it had been disjoined. He represented it as a cruel proceeding, and that its cruelty was enhanced by the circumstance of the sale being advertised in the same paper which contained the intelligence of the death of Hector's young wife. Another listener might have replied that God's ways are just; but Dame Scott, if she thought at the time of her daughter, considered also that Hayston had supported her for many years.

"Good dame," added the agent, "it might have been well for my young friend if he had remained at Whitecraigs. I never saw the wife he married, and has just lost in the bloom of youth; but she must have been fair indeed, if she was fairer than she whom he left. Yet Hector's better principles did not, I am satisfied, entirely forsake him. The disinclination he has shown to visit his paternal property, was the result of a clinging remembrance of her he left mourning in the midst of its glens; nor do I wonder at it, for even I have turned aside to avoid the sight of Alice Scott. Misfortunes, however, are sometimes mercies; and the change of residence you will be now driven to, may aid in the cure of a disease that is only fed by these scenes of Whitecraigs."

He here paused, and, putting his hand in his pocket, took out some money.

"This may be the last gift," he said, as he presented it to her, "that Hector Hayston may ever send you. These are his words. His fortunes are ruined, his wife is dead, and, worse than all, his peace of mind is fled."

"Heaven have mercy on him!" replied the widow. "One word of reproach has never escaped the lips of me or my daughter. I have suffered in this cottage without murmuring, and the glens and hollows of Whitecraigs have alone heard the complainings of Alice Scott. She will cling to these places to the last; but were the windows of the deserted house again opened, with strange faces there, and maybe the lights of the entertainments of the happy shining through them, she might feel less pleasure in sitting by the pond from which she now so often surveys the deserted mansion. This last gift, sir, moves my tears—yea, for all I and mine have suffered from Hector Hayston."

The agent had performed his duty, and departed with the promise that he would, of his own accord, endeavour to prevail upon some of his employers to grant her a cottage, if the purchaser of Whitecraigs should resist an appeal for her to remain. He had no sooner gone, than the stranger Wallace, who had heard the conversation, entered. He asked her how much money Hector had sent as his last gift; and, on being informed—

"That young man," he said, "has fallen a victim to the allurements of a town life. The story of your daughter has been known to me; but I have avoided the mention of the name of Hayston, which could only have yielded pain without an amelioration of its cause. That gift speaks to me volumes. Even fashion has not sterilized the heart of that young man. He has erred—he may have transgressed—but for all, all, there is a 29th of September!"

The allusion he thus made was as inscrutable as ever. Again she reflected upon her husband's conduct upon that day of the year; and again, as she had done a hundred times, searched the face of the speaker. But she abstained from question; and the day passed, and others came, till the eventful morning was ushered in by sunshine. Wallace

was up by times; and his prayers were heard directed to the Throne of Mercy, in thanks and heart-expressed contrition. In the forenoon he went forth with freedom, climbed the hills, and conversed with the anglers he met on the Lyne. He seemed as if relieved from some weighty burden; and the dame, who had carefully watched his motions, waited anxiously for the secret. He had not, however, pledged himself to reveal it on that day. He had only said that all would be made known some time after the day had passed; and, accordingly, he made no declaration. Yet, at bedtime, he was again engaged in prayers, and even during the night he was heard muttering expressions of thanksgiving to the Author of the day, and what the day bringeth.

On the following morning, he announced his intention of going to Peebles, whither he was supposed to have gone before; but now his manner of going was changed. He purposed taking the coach, which, as it passed within some miles of Whitecraigs, he intended to wait for, and on departing—

"You will not hear of me till to-morrow night," he said. "I can now face man; would that I could with the same confidence hold up my countenance to God. Alice Scott," he continued, as he looked to the girl, "I will not forget you in my absence. Your day of sorrow has been long; but there may yet be a 29th of September even to you."

And, taking the maiden kindly in his arms, he whispered some words in her ear, in which the magic syllables of a name she trembled to hear were mixed. Her eyes exhibited a momentary brightness, a deep sigh heaved her bosom, and again her head declined, with a whisper on her lips—"Never, O never!" In a moment after, he was gone; and the widow was left to ascertain from Alice what he had said, to bring again, even for a moment, the blood to her cheek.

On the day after, there was a crowd of people in the Town-Hall of Peebles, and the auctioneer was reading aloud the articles of roup of the lands of Whitecraigs. Mr. Colville was there in high hopes; but there were others too, who seemed inclined to disappoint them. The property was set up at the price of fifteen thousand pounds, and that sum was soon offered by the holder of the mortgage. Other bodes quickly followed, and a competition commenced, which soon raised the price to eighteen thousand, at which it seemed to be destined to be given to Haughton. The other competitors appeared timid; and several declared themselves done, one by one, until no one was expected to advance a pound higher. All was silence, save for the voice of the auctioneer; and he had already begun his ominous once, twice, when a voice which had not yet been heard, cried—"Eighteen thousand two hundred." The hammer was suspended, and all eyes turned to view the doughty assailant, who would, at the end of the day, vanquish the champion who had as yet retained the field. Those eyes recognised in the bidder a man poorly clothed, and more like an alms-seeker than the purchaser of an estate—no other was that man than Mr. Wallace. The auctioneer looked at him; others looked and wondered; and Haughton gloomed, as he advanced another hundred; and that was soon followed by a hundred more, which led to a competition that seemed to be embittered on the one part by pride and contempt, and on the other by determination. Hundred upon hundred followed in rapid succession, till Haughton gave up in despair, and a shout rung through the hall as the hammer fell, and the estate was declared the property of the humble stranger, whom no one knew, and whom no one would have considered worth more than the clothes he carried on his back. A certificate of a banker at Peebles—that he held in his hands funds, belonging to the purchaser, of greater amount than

the price—satisfied the judge of the roup; and the party were divided in circles, conversing on the strange turn which had been given to the sale of Whitecraigs.

On the same night, Wallace returned to Homestead, and sat down composedly to the humble meal that had been prepared for him by the widow. Alice was in her usual seat; and the placidity of manner which distinguished them from ordinary sufferers, spoke their usual obedience to the Divine will.

"This day the property of Whitecraigs has changed masters!" said he.

"And who has purchased it?" inquired the mother.

"He who is now sitting before you!" replied he.

Alice turned her head to look at him; the mother sat mute with surprise; while he rose and fastened the door.

"It is even so," he continued, as he again sat down; "David Scott, the brother of your husband, and the uncle of Alice, has this day purchased Whitecraigs."

A faint scream from the mother followed this announcement, and, recovering herself, she again fixed her eyes on the stranger.

"It is true," continued he; "I am the brother of your deceased husband. For two years after you were married to Adam, you would, doubtless, hear him speak of me, as then engaged in a calling of which I may now be ashamed, for I was one of the most daring smugglers on the Solway. The 29th of September, 17—, dawned upon me, yet with hands unsullied in the blood of man; but the sun of that day set upon me as proscribed by God and my country. My name was read on the house walls, and execration followed my steps, as I flew from cave to cave. Yet who could have told that that day in which my evil spirit wrought its greatest triumph over good, was that whose evening shades closed upon a repentant soul!"

He paused, and placed his hand on his brow.

"These things are to me as an old dream," replied the widow, looking round her, as if in search of memorials of stationary space. "My husband never afterwards mentioned your name, save to inform me that you had died in the West Indies; yet now I see the import of his devotion, in the coming round of the day that shamed the honest family to whom he belonged."

"And it was to save that shame, and to secure my safety under my assumed name, that, after I flew to the islands of the west, I got intelligence of my death sent to Scotland. What other than the issue of this day must have been in the view of the great Disposer of events, when, in addition to the grace He poured on the heart of the sinner, He invested the arm that had been lifted against His creatures with the prosperity that filled my coffers! But, alas! though I may have reason to trust to the forgiveness of Heaven, that of man I may never expect."

"And punishment still awaits you?" rejoined she.

"No, no!" he cried, as he rose and placed his foot firmly on the floor. "I am free—the heart may hate me, the tongue may scorn me, the hand may point at me, but it dare not strike. On the 29th of September I was no longer amenable to the laws for the crime which drove me to foreign lands: twenty years free the culprit from the vengeance of man; the last day of that period was the 29th of September—it is past; and now God is my only judge." He again paused. "But I must live still as David Wallace. The name of Scott shall not be sullied by me. As David Wallace I have made my fortune, and as David Wallace made my supplications to Heaven. By the same name I have bought Whitecraigs, and by that name I shall make it over to one who may yet retrieve the honour of our humble house—to Alice, who should, through other means, have been mistress. Come to your natural

protector, Alice, and tell him if you will consent to be the lady of Whitecraigs."

The girl, on whom the ordinary occurrences of life now seldom made any impression, had listened attentively to the extraordinary facts and intentions thus evolved; and, at his bidding, rose and stood by his side. He took her hand, and looked into her face.

"I knew," said he, "that I was pledged not to mention a certain name while you were by; and I kept my word, with the exception of the whisper I stole into your ear on the day I set out for Peebles. But things are now changed. The rights of Whitecraigs are now in the act of being made out in your name. Within a month you will be mistress of that mansion, and of those green dells and hills you have loved to wander among in joy and in sorrow. Now, will you answer me a question?"

"I will!" she replied.

"What would be your answer to Hector Hayston—who is now no longer a husband, and no longer rich—were he to come to Whitecraigs and make amends for all that is by and gone? Would you receive him kindly, or turn him from the door of the house of his fathers?"

The question was too sudden, or too touchingly devised. She looked for a moment in his face, burst into tears, and hid her face in his breast.

"Try her poor heart not thus!" cried the mother "Time, that as yet has done nothing but made ravages, may now, when things are so changed, work miracles. Do not press the question. A woman and a mother knows better than you can do what are now her feelings. The answer is not asked—Alice, your uncle has taken back his question!"

"I have—I have!" replied he, as he pressed her to his breast. "Look up, my dear Alice. I have, in my pride and power, been hasty, and thought I could rule the heart

of woman as I have done my own, even in its rebellion against God. I have yet all to learn of those secret workings of the spirit, in all save repentance. I never myself knew what it was to love, far less what it is to love and be forsaken. No more—no more. I will not again touch those strings."

And, rising hurriedly, he consigned the maid to her mother, and went out, to afford her time to collect again her thoughts. During the following week the furniture of Whitecraigs was disposed of by Mr. Pringle, for behoof of the other creditors of Hayston, and purchased by the uncle, who took another journey to Peebles, for the purpose of negotiating the sale, and making further preparations for obtaining entry. In a fortnight after, the keys were sent to Homestead by a messenger, while the making up of the titles was in the course of progress. It was no part of the intention of Wallace to reside in the mansion-house: his object was still secrecy; and, though the form and character of the transaction might lead ultimately to a discovery, he cared not. By the prescription of the crime he had committed, he was free from punishment; while, by retaining his name, and living ostensibly in a humble condition, he had a chance of escaping a detection of his true character, at the same time that he might, by humility and good services, render himself more acceptable to that Great Power whose servant he now considered himself to be.

On the twenty-first day of October, the house of Whitecraigs was again open. Servants had been procured from Peebles; the fires were again burning; the wreaths of smoke again ascended from among the trees; and life and living action were taking the place of desertedness. On the forenoon of that day, Wallace took the two females from Homestead, and conducted them, hanging on his arms, to their new place of residence. To speak of feelings,

where a change comprehended an entire revolution of a life of habit, thought, and sentiment, would be as vain as unintelligible. From that day, when the uncle had put the trying question to his niece, a change might have been detected working a gradual influence on her appearance and conduct. Might we say that hope had again lighted her taper within the recesses where all had been so long dreary darkness! The change would not authorize an affirmative—it would have startled the ear that might have feared and yet loved the sounds. One not less versed in human nature might be safer in the construction derived from the new objects, new duties, new desires, new thoughts, from all the thousand things that act on the mind in this wonderful scene of man's existence; but would he be truer to the nature of the heart that has once loved? We may be contented with a mean, where extremes shoot into the darkness of our mysterious nature. Alice Scott took in gradually the interests of her new sphere; did not despise the apparel suited to it; did not reject the manners that adorned it; did not turn a deaf ear or a dead eye to the eloquent ministers that lay around amidst the beauties of Whitecraigs and hailed her as mistress, where she was once a servant, if not a beggar.

Meanwhile the house of Homestead was enlarged, to fit it as a residence for the uncle. Mr. Pringle was continued agent for the proprietress of Whitecraigs; and, while many, doubtless, speculated on a thousand theories as to these strange occurrences, we may not deny to Hector Hayston, wherever he was, or in whatever circumstances, some interest in what concerned him so nearly as the disposal of his estate, and the fortune of her by whom his first affections had been awakened. Neither shall we say that Wallace and Pringle had not, too, their secret views and understandings, and that the latter was not silent where the interests of his old employer called for

confidence. In all which we may be justified by the fact that, one day, the agent of Whitecraigs introduced to the bachelor of Homestead a young man: it was the former proprietor of Whitecraigs.

"It is natural, Mr. Wallace," said Mr. Pringle, "that one should wish to revisit the scenes of his youth—especially," he added, with a smile, "when these have been one's own property, come from prior generations, and lost by the thoughtlessness of youth."

"It is," replied Wallace, renouncing his usual gravity, "even though there should be no one there who might claim the hand of old friendship. But this young man has only, as yet, seen the hill-tops of his father's lands; and these claim no seclusion from the eye of the traveller. He might wish, with greater ardency, to see the bed where his mother lay when she bore him, or the cradle (which may still be in the house) where she rocked him to sleep."

"God be merciful to me!" replied the youth, as he turned away his head. "This man touches strings whose vibrations harrow me. Sir," he added, "were you ever yourself in the situation of him whose feelings you have thus, from good motives, quickened so painfully?"

"What Whitecraigs and she who lives now in the house yonder were or are to you, Scotland and my kindred were to me; but the house where I was born knows me not, and the bed and the cradle do not own me. But Alice Scott recognised me as a fellow-creature, whatever more I say not; and even that, from one so good, and, even yet, so beautiful—is something to live for. No more. I know all. Will you risk a meeting?"

"Mr. Pringle will answer for me," replied he, as he turned, with a full heart, to the window.

"And I will answer for Mr. Pringle," said Wallace.

"But who will answer for *her?*" rejoined the other.

"Stay there," said Wallace. "I will return in a few minutes."

And, bending his steps to Whitecraigs House, he was, for a time, engaged with Alice and her mother. He again returned to Homestead; and, in a few minutes after, the three were walking towards the mansion. The eye of the young man glanced furtively from side to side, as if to catch glimpses of old features which had become strange to him; but in the direction of the house he seemed to have no power to look—lagging behind, and displaying an anxiety to be concealed, by the bodies of the others, from the view of the windows. On arriving at the house, Wallace and Pringle went into an apartment where the mother was seated. Hector stood in the passage: he feared that Alice was there, and would not enter.

"Think you," whispered Wallace, quickly returning to him, "that I, whom you accused of touching tender chords, am so little acquainted with human nature as to admit of witnesses to your meeting with Alice Scott? There, the green parlour in the west wing," he continued, pointing up the inside stair to a room well known to the youth. "If you cannot effect it, who may try? Go—go!"

"I cannot—I cannot!" he replied, in deep tones. "My feet will not carry me. That room was my mother's favourite parlour. A thousand associations are busy with me. And now, who sits there?"

"Come, come!" said Pringle, as he came forth, in consequence of hearing Hayston's irresolution. "What did you expect on coming here? Alice to come and fly to you with open arms?"

"No, sir; to reject me with a wave of disdain!" replied the youth. "I am smitten from within, and confidence has left me. Let me see her mother first. My cruelty to her has been mixed with kindness, and she may give me some heart."

And he turned to the apartment where the mother sat.

"Your confidence will not be restored by anything the mother can say!" rejoined Pringle, who was getting alarmed for the success of his efforts. "Alice is now mistress here, and must be won by contrition, and a prayer for forgiveness."

"Ho!" interjected Wallace. "To what tends this mummery? Must I take you by the hand, and lead you to one who, for years, has seen you in every flitting shade of the hills, and heard you in every note of the sighing winds of the valley?"

"To hate me as I deserve to be hated!" replied Hayston, still irresolute. "None of you can give me any ground for hope, and seem to push me on to experience a rejection which may seal my misery for ever!"

Wallace smiled in silence, beckoned Pringle into the room beside the mother, and taking Hayston by the arm, with a show of humour that accorded but indifferently with the real anguish of doubt and dismay by which the young man's mind was occupied, forced him on to the first step of the inside stair.

"You are now fairly committed!" said he, smiling: "to retreat, is ruin; to advance, happiness, and love, and peace."

And he retreated to the room where Pringle was, leaving the youth to the strength or weakness of his own resolution. His tread was now heard, slow and hesitating, on the stair. Some time elapsed before the sound of the opening door was heard; and that it remained for a time open, held by the doubtful hand, might also have been observed. At last it was shut; and quick steps on the floor indicated that the first look had not been fraught with rejection.

The party below were, meanwhile, speculating on the result of the meeting. Even the mother was not certain

that it would, at first, be attended with success. Alice had yielded no consent; and it was only from the mother's construction of her looks, that she had given her authority for the interview.

"All is now decided, for good or evil," said Wallace. "Go up stairs, and bring us a report of the state of affairs."

The mother obeyed; and, after a considerable time, returned, with her eyes swimming in tears.

"Is it so?" said her friend. "Is it really so? Has all my labour been fruitless?"

"No," replied she; "but I could not stand the sight. I found her lying on the breast of Hector, sobbing out the sorrows of years. Her eyes have been long dry. The heart is at last opened."

"Too good a sight for me to lose," replied her friend. "For twenty years I have only known the tears of penitence: I will now experience those that flow from the happiness of others."

And, with these words, he hurried up stairs. We would follow, but that we are aware of the danger of treading ground almost forbidden to inspiration. Within two hours afterwards, Hector Hayston and Alice Scott were again among the glens of Whitecraigs, seeking out those places where, before, they used to breathe the accents of a first affection. The one had been true to the end; and the other had been false only to learn the beauty of truth. We have given these details from a true record, and have derived pleasure from the recollections they have awakened; but we fairly admit, that we would yield one half of what we have experienced of the good, to have marked that day the workings of the retrieved spirit in the eyes, and speech, and manners of Alice Scott. These are nature's true magic. The drooping flower that is all but dead in the dry, parched soil, raises its head, takes on

fresh colours, and gives forth fresh odours, as the spring showers fall on its withered leaves. Oh! there is a magic there that escapes not even the eye of dull labour, retiring home sick of all but the repose he needs. But the process in the frame that is the temple of beauty, worth, intelligence, sensibility, rearing all in loveliness afresh, out of what was deemed the ruins only of what is the greatest and best of God's works—to see this, and to feel it, is to rejoice that we are placed in a world that, with all its elements of vice and sorrow, is yet a place where the good and the virtuous may find something analogous to that for which the spirit pants in other worlds.

Yet, though we saw it not, we have enough of the conception, through fancy, to be thankful for the gift even of the *ideal* of the good; and here we are satisfied that we have more. Hector Hayston and Alice Scott were married. David Wallace's history was long concealed, but curiosity finally triumphed; yet with no effect calculated to impair the equanimity of a mind which repentance, and a reliance on God's grace, had long rendered independent of the opinions of men. He had wrought for evil, and good came of it; and he lived long to see, in the house of Whitecraigs, its master, mistress, and children, the benefits of the prescription which the 29th of September effected—a principle of the law of Scotland that was long deemed inconsistent with the good of the land, but now more properly considered as being no less in unison with the feelings of man than it is with divine mercy.

THE COUNTESS OF WISTONBURY.

In the summer of 1836 I had occasion to make a journey into Wiltshire, in England. As the business that called me there, although of sufficient importance to me, would have no interest whatever for the reader, I will readily be excused, I dare say, from saying of what nature that business was. It will more concern him, from its connection with the sequel, to know that my residence, while in England, was in a certain beautiful little village at the southern extremity of the shire above named, and that mine host, during my stay there, was the worthy landlord of the White Hart Inn, as intelligent and well-informed a man as it has often been my good fortune to meet with. The nature of the business which made me a guest of Michael Jones, left me a great deal more spare time than I knew well what to do with. It hung heavy upon my hands; and my good host, perceiving this, suggested a little excursion, which, he said, he thought would dispose of one day, at any rate, agreeably enough.

"I would recommend you, sir," he said, "to pay a visit to Oxton Hall, the seat of the Earl of Wistonbury.* It is one of the finest residences in England; and, as the family are not there just now, you may see the whole house, both inside and outside. If you think of it, I will give you a line to the butler, a very old friend of mine, and he will be glad to show you all that's worth seeing about the place."

"How far distant is it?" I inquired.

* Under this name we choose, for obvious reasons, to conceal the real one.—*Ed.*

"Oh, not more than three miles and a half—little more than an hour's easy walk," replied mine host.

"Excellent!" said I; "thank you for the hint, landlord. Let me have the introduction to the butler you spoke about, and I'll set off directly."

In less than five minutes, a card, addressed to Mr. John Grafton, butler, Oxton Hall, was put into my hands, and in two minutes more I was on my way to the ancient seat of the Earls of Wistonbury. The directions given me as to my route, carefully noted on my part, brought me, in little more than an hour, to a spacious and noble gateway, secured by a magnificent gate of cast-iron. This I at once recognised, from the description given me by Mr. Jones, to be the principal entrance to Oxton Hall. Satisfied that it was so, I unhesitatingly entered—and the house of one of the proudest of England's aristocracy stood before me, in all its lordly magnificence. A spacious lawn, of the brightest and most beautiful verdure, dotted over with noble oaks, and tenanted by some scores of fallow-deer, stretched far and wide on every side. In the centre of this splendid park—such a park as England alone can exhibit—arose the mansion-house, an ancient and stately pile, of great extent and lofty structure.

Having found the person to whose civilities I was recommended by mine host of the White Hart—a mild and pleasant-looking old man, of about seventy years of age—I put my credentials into his hands. On reading it, the old man looked at me smilingly, and said that he would have much pleasure in obliging his good friend Mr. Jones, by showing me all that was worth seeing both in and about the house; and many things both curious and rare, and, I may add, both costly and splendid, did I see ere another hour had passed away; but fearing the reader's patience would scarcely stand the trial of a description of them, I refrain from the experiment, and proceed to say,

that, just as our survey of the house was concluded, my cicerone, as if suddenly recollecting himself, said—

"By-the-by, sir, perhaps you would like to see the picture gallery, although it is hardly worth seeing just now —most of the pictures having been removed to our house in Grosvenor Square last winter; and, being in this denuded state, I never think of showing it to visitors. There are, however, a few portraits of different members of the family still left, and these you may see if you have any curiosity regarding them."

Such curiosity I avowed I felt, and was immediately conducted into the presence of a number of the pictorial ancestry of the illustrious house of Wistonbury. The greater part of the pictures had been removed, as my conductor had informed me; but a few still remained scattered along the lofty walls of the gallery.

"That," said my cicerone, pointing to a grim warrior, clad from head to heel in a panoply of steel,—"that is Henry, first Earl of Wistonbury, who fell in Palestine during the holy wars; and this," directing my attention to another picture, "is the grandfather of the present Earl."

"A very handsome and pleasant-looking young man," said I, struck with the forcible representation of these qualities which the painting exhibited.

"Ay," replied the old man, "and as good as he was handsome. He is the pride of the house; and the country around yet rings with his name, associated with all that is kind and charitable."

"And who is this lovely creature?" said I, now pointing in my turn to the portrait of a young female of the most exquisite beauty—the face strikingly resembling some of the best executed likenesses of the unfortunate Queen Mary—which hung beside that of the Good Earl of Wistonbury, as the nobleman of whom my cicerone had just spoken was called throughout the country

"That lady, sir," replied the latter, "was his wife—the Countess of Wistonbury. She was one of the most beautiful women of her time; and, like her husband, was beloved by all around her, for the gentleness of her manners and benevolence of her disposition."

"But what's this?" said I, advancing a little nearer the picture, to examine something in her attire that puzzled me. "A Scotch plaid!" I exclaimed in considerable surprise, on ascertaining that this was the article of dress which had perplexed me. "Pray, what has the Scotch plaid to do here? How happens it that we find a Countess of Wistonbury arrayed in the costume of Caledonia?"

"Why, sir, the reason is good—perfectly satisfactory," replied Mr. Grafton, smilingly. "She was a native of that country."

"Indeed!" said I. "A countrywoman of mine! Of what family?" added I.

My conductor smiled.

"Truly," said he, after a pause, "that is a question easier put than answered."

"What!" said I, "was she not of some distinguished house?"

"By no means, sir," replied Mr. Grafton. "She was a person of the humblest birth and station; but this did not hinder her from becoming Countess of Wistonbury, nor from being one of the best as well as most beautiful that ever bore the title."

"Ah, ha!" said I to myself, "here's a story for the 'Tales of the Borders.'" I did not say this to Mr. Grafton, however; but to him I did say—"There must be some interesting story connected with this lady. The history of her singular good fortune must be curious, and well worth hearing."

"Why, it certainly is," replied my conductor, with the air of one who, while he cannot but acknowledge that there

is interest in a certain piece of information which he possesses, is yet so familiar with it himself, has owned it so long, and communicated it so often, that his feelings seem to belie his words—the former remaining unmoved by the tale which the latter unfolds. "There is certainly something curious in the Countess's story," said Mr. Grafton; "and, now that we have seen everything that is worth seeing, if you will come with me to my little refectory, I will tell you all about it over a tankard of fine old ale and a slice of cold round."

Need I say, good reader, that I at once and gladly accepted an invitation that so happily combined the intellectual and the sensual? You will give me credit for more sense; and the following story will prove at once that your good opinion is not misplaced, that I must have been an attentive listener, and, lastly, that I must be blessed with a pretty retentive memory. I relate the story in my own way, but without taking the slightest liberty with any single one of the details given me by my informant, who, from having been upwards of forty-five years in the service of the Earls of Wistonbury, and, during the greater part of that time their principal and most confidential domestic, was minutely and accurately informed regarding every remarkable event that had occurred in the family for several generations back.

"But, before we leave this part of the house," resumed Mr. Grafton, "be so good as step with me a moment into this small room here, till I show you a certain little article that cuts some figure in the story which I shall shortly tell you."

Saying this, he led the way into the small apartment he alluded to, and, conducting me towards a handsome ebony or blackwood cabinet that occupied one end of the room, he threw open its little folding doors, and exhibited to me, not some rich or rare curiosity, as I had expected, but a

small, plain, very plain—or I should, perhaps, rather say very coarse—country-looking, blue-painted chest.

"Do you see that little chest, sir?" said Mr. Grafton, smilingly.

"I do," said I; "and it seems a very homely article to be so splendidly entombed, and so carefully kept."

"Yet," replied Mr. Grafton, "homely as it is, and small as is its intrinsic value, that is one of the heir-looms of the family, and one of the most fondly-cherished of them all."

"Indeed!" said I, in some surprise. "Then I am very sure it cannot be for its marketable worth. It wouldn't bring sixpence."

"I verily believe it would not," replied Mr. Grafton. "Yet the Earl of Wistonbury would not part with that little chest for a good round sum, I warrant ye."

"Pray, explain, my good sir."

"I will. That little, blue-painted chest contained all the worldly wealth—a few articles of female dress—of the lady whose portrait you were just now so much admiring, when she became Countess of Wistonbury."

"Why, then," said I, "that is proof that riches, at any rate, had nothing to do with her promotion to that high rank."

"They certainly had not," replied my aged friend. "But all this you will learn more particularly in the story which I shall tell you presently. You will then learn, also, how the little, blue-painted chest comes to figure in the history of a countess."

Saying this, Mr. Grafton shut the doors of the cabinet, when we left the apartment, and, in a few minutes after, I found myself in what my worthy old host called his refectory. This was a snug little room, most comfortably furnished, and in which I observed a very large quantity of silver plate,—being, I presumed, the depository of that

portion of the family's wealth. My good old friend now rung his bell, when a female servant appeared.

"Let's have summut to eat, Betsy," said the old man; and never was order more promptly or more effectively obeyed.

In an instant the table, which occupied the centre of the floor, absolutely creaked under the load of good things with which it was encumbered. The "slice of cold round," I found, was but a *nomme de guerre* with the old man, and meant everything in the edible way that was choice and savoury. To this conclusion I came from seeing the table before me covered with a great variety of good things, amongst which rose, conspicuous in the centre, a huge venison pasty. When the *loading* of the table was completed, and the servant had retired—

"Now," said the old man, looking at me with a significant smile, and at the same time drawing a bunch of small keys from his pocket, from which he carefully singled out one, "since Betsy has done her part so well, let me see if I can't do mine as creditably."

Saying this, he opened what I thought a sly-looking little cupboard, and brought forth from its mysterious recess an aristocratic-looking bottle, sealed with black wax, and whose shoulders were still thickly coated with sawdust. Handling this venerable bottle with a lightness and delicacy of touch which a long practice only could have given, and with a degree of reverence which an *à priori* knowledge of its contents only could have inspired, my worthy host tenderly brushed off its coating of sawdust, gently inserted the screw, drew the cork, with a calm, cautious, steady pull, and, in the next moment, had filled up two brimmers of the finest old port that the cellars of Oxton Hall could produce. Having done ample justice to the good things before us—

"Now, my good sir, the story, the story, if you please," said I.

"Oh, to be sure," replied my kind host, smiling. "The story you shall have. But first let us take another glass of wine, to inspire me with fortitude to begin so long a story, and you with patience to listen to it."

The procedure thus recommended having been complied with, the good old man immediately began:—

"About a hundred and thirteen years since," he said, "there lived in the neighbourhood of one of the principal cities in Scotland, a farmer of the name of Flowerdew. He was a man of respectable character, and of sober and industrious habits. His family consisted only of himself, his wife, and an only child—a daughter, named Jessy. Gentle and affectionate, of the most winning manners, and surpassingly beautiful in form and feature, Jessy was not only the darling of her father, but the favourite character of the neighbourhood in which she lived. All yielded the homage of admiration to her supreme loveliness, and of the tenderest esteem to her worth.

For many years, Jessy's father contrived, notwithstanding of an enormous rent, to keep pace with the world, and eventually to raise himself a little above it; but, in despite of all his industry and all his prudence, reverses came. A succession of bad crops was followed by a series of losses of various kinds, and James Flowerdew found himself a ruined man.

'It's not for myself I care,' said the honest man, when speaking one day with his wife of the misfortunes which had overwhelmed them—'it's for our puir bit lassie, guidwife. God help her! I thought to have left her independent; but it's been ordained otherwise, and we must submit. But what's to become of her I know not. Being brocht up a little abune the common, she cannot be asked to enter into the service of ony o' our neebors; yet, I see nae other way o't. It must come to that in the lang run.'

'I suppose it must, guidman—I suppose it must,' replied his wife, raising the corner of her apron to her eye, and then bursting into tears. 'My puir, dear, gentle lassie,' she exclaimed, 'it's a sad change to her; but I ken she'll meet it cheerfully, and without repining. But, guidman, if to service she must go, and I fancy there's little doot o' that, wouldna it be better if we could get her into the service of some respectable family in the toon, than to put her wi' ony o' our neebors, where she might be reminded o' her fall, as they will call it?'

'It's a good thought, Lizzy,' replied her husband, musingly, as he gazed in sadness on the fire that burned before him. 'It's a good thought,' he said. 'She will be there unknown, and her feelings saved from the taunts of callous impertinence. I will think of it,' added Flowerdew. 'In the meantime, guidwife, prepare Jessy, the best way you can, for the change of situation in life which she is about to meet with. I canna do it. It would break my heart a'thegither.'

This painful task Mrs. Flowerdew undertook; and, as she expected, found her daughter not only reconciled to the step which was proposed for her, but eager and anxious to be put in a way of doing for herself, and, as she fondly hoped and affectionately said, of aiding her parents.

Shortly after this, the ruin which had overtaken James Flowerdew began to present itself in its most instant and most distressing shapes. Arrestments were laid on his funds in all quarters. Visits of messengers were frequent, almost daily; and his whole stock and crop were sequestrated by the landlord, and a day for the sale fixed. This last was a sight from which Flowerdew anxiously wished to save his daughter, and he meant to do so, if he could, by finding her 'a place' previous to the day of sale.

The duty of looking out for a situation for Jessy in town

Flowerdew took upon himself, from the circumstance of his having been in the habit for many years of supplying a number of respectable families with the produce of his farm, which he generally delivered himself, his simple character and industrious habits not permitting him to see any degradation in driving his own cart on these occasions. Flowerdew had thus formed a personal acquaintance with many families of the better class, which he thought might be useful to him in his present views.

Amongst the oldest and most respected of his customers was a learned professor, whom, to avoid what might be an inconvenient identification of circumstances, we shall call Lockerby. With this gentleman Flowerdew resolved to begin his inquiries respecting a situation for his daughter. He did so, and on being introduced to him, explained the purpose of his visit.

'Dear me, Mr. Flowerdew!' said the worthy professor, in surprise at the application, 'I thought—I all along thought, that your circumstances would entitle your daughter, whose modesty of demeanour and great beauty of person I have had frequent opportunities of admiring—she having called here frequently, as you know, on various occasions connected with our little traffic—I say, I thought your circumstances would entitle your daughter to look for something higher than the situation of a domestic servant.'

'I once thought so myself, professor,' replied Mr. Flowerdew, with a tear standing in his eye; 'but it has turned out otherwise. The truth is, that I have lately met with such reverses as have entirely ruined me. I am about to be ejected from my farm, and must betake myself to daily labour for a subsistence. In this explanation you will see the reason why I apply to you for a situation in your family for my daughter.'

'Too clearly—too clearly,' replied the worthy professor

sincerely grieving for the misfortunes of a man whom he had long known, and whose uprightness of conduct and character he had long appreciated. 'I am seriously distressed, Mr. Flowerdew,' he added, 'to learn all this—seriously distressed, indeed; but, in the meantime, let us consult Mrs. Lockerby on the subject of your present visit.' And he rang the bell, and desired the servant who answered it, to request his wife to come to him. She came, and on being informed of Mr. Flowerdew's application in behalf of his daughter, at once agreed to receive her into her service; adding, that she might, if she chose, enter on her duties immediately. It was finally arranged that Jessy should take possession of her situation on the following day.

Highly gratified at having got admission for his daughter into so worthy and respectable a family, Flowerdew returned home with a lighter heart than he had possessed for some time before. He felt that his Jessy was now, in a manner, provided for; and that, although the situation was a humble one, and far short of what he had once expected for her, it was yet a creditable one, and one presenting no mean field for the exercise of some of the best qualities which a woman can possess.

Equally pleased with her father at the opening that had been found for her, the gentle girl lost no time in making such preparations as the impending change in her position in life rendered necessary. Part of these preparations, all cheerfully performed, consisted in packing a small trunk with her clothes, and in other procedures of a similar kind. In this employment her mother endeavoured to assist her, but was too much affected by the sadness of the task to afford any very efficient aid, although her daughter did all she could, by assuming a light-heartedness which she could not altogether feel, to assuage the grief to which her mother was every moment giving way.

'Why grieve yourself in that way, mother?' she would say, pausing in her operations, and flinging her arms around her parent's neck. 'I assure you I am happy at the prospect of being put in a way of doing for myself; I consider it no hardship—not in the least. I will take a pride in discharging my new duties faithfully and diligently; and I hope that, even in the humble sphere in which I am about to move, I shall contrive to make myself both esteemed and respected.'

'*That* I dinna doubt—that I dinna doubt, my dear lassie,' replied her mother; 'but, oh, it goes to my heart to see you gaun into the service o' ithers. I never expected to see the day. Oh, this is a sad change that's come over us a'!' And again the poor woman burst into a paroxysm of grief.

'Mother,' said the girl, 'you will dishearten me if you go on in this way.' Then smiling through the tears of affection that glistened on her eye, and assuming a tone of affected cheerfulness, 'Come now, dear mother, do drop this desponding tone. There's better days in store for us yet. We'll get above all this by-and-by. In the meantime it is our duty, as Christians, to submit to the destiny that has been decreed us with patience and resignation. Come, mother, I'll sing you the song you used always to like so well to hear me sing.' And, without waiting for any remark in reply, or pausing in her employment, the girl immediately began, in a voice whose richness of tone and deep pathos possessed the most thrilling power:—

A cheerfu' heart's been always mine,
Whatever might betide me, O!
In foul or fair, in shade or shine,
I've aye had that to guide me, O!

When luck cam chappin' at my door,
Wi' right goodwill I cheered him, O!
And whan misfortune cam, I swore
The ne'er a bit I feared him, O!'

'O lassie, lassie!' exclaimed Jessy's mother, here interrupting her, and now smiling as she spoke—'how can ye think o' singing at such a time? But God lang vouchsafe ye sae light and cheerfu' a heart! It's a great blessing, Jessy, and canna be prized too highly.'

'I'm aware of it, mother,' replied her daughter, 'and am, I trust, thankful for it. I dinna see, after a', that anything should seriously distress us—but guilt. If we keep free o' *that*, what hae we to fear? A' ither mischances will mend, or if they dinna, they'll at least smooth doon wi' time.'

'But why are ye no puttin' up your silk goun, Jessy?' here interposed her mother, abruptly; seeing her daughter laying aside the article of dress she referred to, as if she did not intend it should have a place in the little chest she was packing.

'The silk gown, mother, I'll no tak wi' me,' replied Jessy, smiling; 'I'll leave't at hame till better times come roun'. It would hardly become my station now, mother, to be gaun flaunting about in silks.'

'Too true, Jessy,' said her mother with a sigh. 'It may be as weel, as ye say, to leave't at hame for a wee, till times mend wi' us at ony rate, although God only knows when that may be, if ever.'

'I'll keep it for my wedding gown, mother,' said Jessy, laughingly, and with an intention of counteracting the depressing tendency of her inadvertent remarks on the propriety of her leaving her silk gown behind. 'I'll keep it for my wedding dress, mother,' she said, 'although it's mair than likely that a plainer attire will be mair suitable for that occasion too.'

'Nae sayin', Jessy,' replied her mother. 'Ye'll maybe get a canny laird yet, that can ride to market wi' siller spurs on his boots and gowd lace on his hat.'

'Far less will please me, mither,' replied Jessy, blush-

ing and laughing at the same time. 'I never, even in our best days, looked so high, and it would ill become me to do so now.'

With such conversation as this did mother and daughter endeavour to divert their minds from dwelling on the painful reflection which the latter's occupation was so well calculated to excite.

An early hour of the following morning saw Jessy Flowerdew seated in a little cart, well lined with straw by her doting father, who proposed driving her himself into the city. A *small, blue-painted chest*, a bandbox, and one or two small bundles, formed the whole of her travelling accompaniments. She herself was wrapped in a scarlet mantle, and wore on her head a light straw bonnet, of tasteful shape, and admirably adapted to the complexion and contour of the fine countenance which it gracefully enclosed.

After a delay of a few minutes—for the cart in which Jessy was seated was still standing at the door—her father, dressed in his Sunday's suit, came out of the house, stepped up to the horse's head, took the reins in his hand, and gently put in motion the little humble conveyance which was to bear his daughter away from the home of her childhood, and to place her in the house of the stranger. Unable to sustain the agony of a last parting, Jessy's mother had not come out of the house to see her daughter start on her journey; but she was seen, when the cart had proceeded a little way, standing at the door, with her apron at her eyes, looking after it with an expression of the most heartfelt sorrow.

'There's my mother, father,' said Jessy, in a choking voice, on getting a sight of the former in the affecting attitude above described—but she could add no more. In the next instant her face was buried in her handkerchief. Her father turned round on her calling his attention to her

mother, but instantly, and without saying a word, resumed the silent, plodding pace which the circumstance had for a moment interrupted.

In little more than an hour the humble equipage, whose progress we have been tracing, entered the city. Humble, however, as that equipage was, it did not prevent the passers-by from marking the singular beauty of her by whom it was occupied. Many were they who looked round, and stood and gazed in admiration after the little cart and its occupant, as they rattled along the 'stony street.' Their further progress, however, was now a short one. In a few minutes Flowerdew and his daughter found themselves at the professor's door. The former now tenderly lifted out Jessy from the cart—for her sylph-like form, so light and slender, was nothing in the arms of the robust farmer—and placed her in safety on the flag-stones. Her little trunk and bandbox were next taken out by the same friendly hand, and deposited beside her. This done, Flowerdew rapped at the professor's door. It was opened. The father and daughter entered; and, in an hour after—long before which her father had left her—the latter was engaged in the duties of her new situation.

Days, weeks, and months, as they will always do, now passed away, but they still found Jessy in the service of her first employers, whose esteem she had gained by the gentleness of her nature, the modesty of her demeanour, and the extreme propriety of her conduct.

At the time of her first entering into the service of Professor Lockerby, Jessy Flowerdew had just completed her sixteenth year. The charms of her person had not then attained their full perfection. But now that two years more had passed over her head—for this interval must be understood to have elapsed before we resume our tale—her face and figure had attained the zenith of their beauty, a beauty that struck every beholder, and

in every beholder excited feelings of unqualified admiration.

It was about the end of two years after Jessy's advent into the family of the professor, that the latter one morning, raising his head from a letter which he had just been reading, and, turning to the former, who was in the act of removing the breakfast equipage, said—

'Jessy, my girl, will you be so good as put the little parlour and bedroom up stairs in the best order you can, as I expect a young gentleman to-morrow, who is to become a boarder with us.'

Jessy courtseyed her acquiescence in the order just given her, and retired from the apartment to fulfil it.

On the following day a travelling carriage, whose panels were adorned with a coronet, drove up to the door of Professor Lockerby. From this carriage descended a young man, apparently between nineteen and twenty years of age, of the most prepossessing appearance. His countenance was pale, but bore an expression of extreme mildness and benevolence. His figure was tall and slender, but handsomely formed; while his whole manner and bearing bespoke the man of high birth and breeding.

On descending from his carriage, the young man was received by the professor with the most respectful deference—too respectful it seemed to be for the taste of him to whom it was addressed, for he instantly broke through the cold formality of the meeting, by grasping the professor's hand, and shaking it with the heartiest and most cordial goodwill, saying while he did so—

'I hope I see you well, professor.'

'In perfect health, I thank you, my lord,' replied the professor. 'I hope you left your good lady mother, the countess, well.'

'Quite well—I'm obliged to you, professor—as lively

and stirring, and active as ever. Hot and hasty, and a little queenly in her style now and then, as you know, but still the open heart and the open hand of the Wistonburys.'

'I have the honour of knowing the countess well, my lord,' replied the professor, 'and can bear testimony to the nobleness of her nature and disposition. I have known many, many instances of it.'

With such conversation as this, the professor and his noble boarder—for such was the young man whom we have just introduced to the reader—entered the house. Who this young man was, and what was his object in taking up his abode with Professor Lockerby, we will explain in a few words, although such explanation is rendered in part nearly unnecessary by the conversation just recorded between him and the professor. It may not be amiss, however, to say, in more distinct terms, that he was the Earl of Wistonbury, a rank which he had attained just a year before, by the sudden and premature death of his father, who died in the forty-fifth year of his age. Since his accession to the title of his ancestors, the young earl had continued to live in retirement with his mother, a woman of a noble, elevated, and generous soul, well becoming her high lineage—for she, too, was descended of one of the noblest families in England—but in whose temper there was occasionally made visible a dash of the leaven of aristocracy.

On her son, the young earl, her only surviving child, she doted with all the affection of the fondest and tenderest of mothers; and well worthy was that son of all the love she could bestow. His was one of those natures which no earthly elevation can corrupt, no factitious system deprive of its innate simplicity.

The promotion of the young earl to the head of his illustrious house, was, however, a premature one in more respects than one. One of these was to be found in the

circumstance of the young man's being found unprepared —at least so he judged himself—in the matter of education, to fill with credit the high station to which he was so unexpectedly called. His education, in truth, had been rather neglected; and it was to make up for this neglect, to recover his lost ground with all the speed possible, that he was now come to reside for a few months with Professor Lockerby, who had once acted as tutor in his father's family to a brother who had died young.

Such, then, was the professor's boarder, and such was the purpose for which he became so.

The favourable impression which the youthful earl's first appearance had made, suffered no diminution by length of acquaintance. Mild and unpresuming, he won the love of all who came in contact with him. The little personal services he required, he always solicited, never commanded; and what he could with any propriety do himself, he always did, without seeking other assistance.

A quiet and unostentatious inmate of the professor's, time rolled rapidly, but gently and imperceptibly, over the head of the young earl, until a single week only intervened between the moment referred to, and the period fixed on for his return to Oxton Hall.

Thus, nearly six months had elapsed, not a very long period, but one in which much may be accomplished, and in which many a change may take place. And by such features were the six months marked, which the young Earl of Wistonbury had spent in the house of Professor Lockerby. In that time, by dint of unrelaxing assiduity and intense application, he had acquired a respectable knowledge of both Latin and Greek, and in that time, too, he had taken a step which was to affect the whole tenor of his after life, and to make him either happy or miserable, as it had been fortunately or unfortunately made. What that step was we shall divulge, through precisely the same

singular process by which it actually came to the knowledge of the other parties interested.

One evening, at the period to which we a short while since alluded—namely, about a week previous to the expiry of the proposed term of the earl's residence with Professor Lockerby—as Jessy Flowerdew was about to remove the tea equipage from the table of the little parlour in which the professor and his noble pupil usually conducted their studies, the latter suddenly rose from his seat, and, looking at their fair handmaiden with a serious countenance, said—

'Jessy, my love, you must not perform this service again, nor any other of a similar kind. You are now my wife—you are now Countess of Wistonbury.'

We leave it to the reader to imagine, after his own surprise has a little subsided, what was that of the worthy professor, on hearing his noble pupil make so extraordinary, so astounding a declaration—a declaration not less remarkable for its import, than for the occasion on which, and the manner in which it was made.

On recovering from his astonishment, 'My lord,' said the good professor, with a grave and stern countenance, 'be good enough to inform me what this extraordinary conduct means? What can have been your motive, my lord, for using the highly improper and most unguarded language which I have just now heard you utter?'

The young earl, with the greatest calmness and deference of manner, approached the professor, laid his hand upon his heart, and, with a graceful inclination, said, slowly and emphatically—

'Upon my honour, sir, she *is* my wife!'

'What, my lord!' exclaimed the still more and more amazed professor—and now starting from his chair in his excitation—'do you repeat your most unbecoming and incredible assertion?'

'I do, sir,' replied the earl, in the same calm and respectful manner. 'I do repeat it, and say, before God, that Jessy Flowerdew is the lawfully married wife of the Earl of Wistonbury.'

'Well, my lord, well,' said the professor, in angry agitation, 'I know what is my duty in this most extraordinary case. It is to give instant notice to the countess, your mother, of what I must call, my lord, the extremely rash and unadvised step you have taken.'

To this threat and rebuke, the earl replied, with the utmost composure and politeness of manner—'I was not unprepared, sir, for your resentment on this occasion. Neither do I take it in the least amiss. You merely do your duty when you tell me I have forgotten mine. But the step I have taken, sir, allow me to say, although it may appear unadvised, has not been so in reality. I have weighed well the consequences, and am quite prepared to abide them.'

'Be it so, my lord, be it so,' replied the professor. 'I have only now to remark that, as you say you were prepared for *my* resentment, I hope you are also prepared for your mother's, my lord—a matter of much more serious moment.'

'My mother, sir, I will take in my own hands,' replied the earl; 'she can resent, but she can also forgive.'

'I have no more to say, my lord, no more,' rejoined Mr. Lockerby; 'the matter must now be put into the hands of those who have a better right to judge of its propriety than I have. I shall presume on no further remark on the subject.'

'Come, sir,' said the earl, smiling and extending his hand to the professor, 'let this, if you please, be no cause for difference between us. I propose that we allow the matter to lie in abeyance until my mother has been appealed to; she being the only person, you know, who has

a right to be displeased with my proceeding, or whose wishes I was called upon to consult in this matter.'

'Excuse me, my lord,' replied the worthy professor; 'but I must positively decline all interchange of courtesies which may, by any possibility, be construed into an overlooking of this very extraordinary affair.'

'Well, well, my good sir,' said the earl, smiling, and still maintaining the equanimity of his temper, 'judge of me as charitably as you can. In the morning, we shall meet, I trust, better friends.' Saying this, he took up one of the candles which were on the table before him, bade the professor a polite and respectful good night, and retired to his own apartment.

The earl had no sooner withdrawn than Mr. Lockerby, after collecting himself a little, commenced inditing a letter to the Countess Dowager of Wistonbury, apprising her of what had just occurred. In speaking, however, of the 'degrading' connection which her son had made, the honest man's sense of justice compelled him to add a qualifying explanation of the term which he had employed —'degrading, I mean,' he said, '*in point of wealth, rank, and accomplishments;* for, in all other respects, in conduct and character, in temper and disposition, and, above all, in personal appearance—for she is certainly eminently beautiful—I must admit that her superior may not easily be found.'

The letter that contained these remarks, with the other information connected with it, the professor despatched on the same night on which it was written; and, having done this, awaited with what composure and fortitude he could command, the dreadful explosion of aristocratic wrath and indignation, which, he had no doubt, would speedily follow.

Leaving matters in this extraordinary position in the house of Professor Lockerby we shall shift the scene, for

a moment, to the Countess Dowager of Wistonbury's sitting apartment in Oxton Hall; and we shall choose the moment when her favourite footman, Jacob Asterley, has entered her presence, after his return from a call at the post-office in the neighbouring village; the time being the second day after the occurrence just previously related—namely, the despatch to Oxton Hall of Professor Lockerby's letter.

'Well, Jacob, any letters for me to-day?' said the countess, on the entrance of that worthy official.

'One, my lady, from Scotland,' replied the servant, deferentially, and, at the same time, opening the bag in which the letters were usually carried to and from the post-house.

'Ah! from the earl,' said the countess.

'No, my lady, I rather think not. The address is not in his lordship's handwriting.'

'Oh! the good Professor Lockerby,' said the countess, contemplating for a moment the address of the letter in question, which was now in her ladyship's hands. 'I hope nothing unpleasant has occurred to my son.' And while she spoke, she hurriedly broke the seal, and, in the next instant, was intently engaged in perusing the intelligence which it had secured from the prying curiosity of parties whom it did not concern.

It would take a much abler pen than that now employed in tracing these lines, to convey anything like an adequate idea of the mingled expression of amazement, indignation, and grief exhibited on the countenance, and in every act and attitude of the proud Countess of Wistonbury, on reading the story of her son's degradation. The flush of haughty resentment was succeeded by the sudden paleness of despair; and in frequent alternation did these strong expressions of varied feeling flit across the fine countenance —still fine, although it had looked on fifty summers—of

the heart-stricken mother, as she proceeded in her perusal of the fatal document. On completing the perusal, the countess threw herself in silent distraction on a sofa, and, still holding the open letter in her hand, sank into a maze of wild and wandering thoughts. These, however, seemed at length to concentrate in one decisive and sudden resolution. Starting from the reclining posture into which she had thrown herself, she advanced towards the bell-pull, rung furiously, and, when the servant entered to know what were her commands—

'Order the travelling carriage instantly, Jacob,' she said —'instantly, instantly; and let four of my best horses be put in the harness. What do you stare at, fool?' she added, irritated at the look of astonishment which the inexplicable violence of her manner had called into the countenance of her trusty domestic. 'Do as you are ordered, directly.' The man bowed and withdrew; and in pursuance of the commands he had received, proceeded to the stables.

'Here's a start, Thomas! he said, addressing a jolly-looking fellow, who was busily employed in brushing up some harness; the travelling carriage directly, and four of your best horses for my lady.'

'Why, what the devil's the matter now?' replied Thomas, pausing in his operations; 'where's the old girl a-going to?'

'Not knowing, can't say,' replied Jacob; 'but she's in a woundy fuss, I warrant you. Never seed her in such a quandary in my life. Something's wrong somewhere, I guess.'

'Well, well, all's one to me,' said Thomas, with philosophical indifference; but it looks like a long start, wherever it may be to; so I'll get my traps in order.' And this duty was so expeditiously performed, that, in less than fifteen minutes, the very handsome travelling carriage of

the Earl of Wistonbury, drawn by four spanking bays, flashed up to the door of Oxton Hall. In an instant after, it was occupied by the dowager countess, and in another, was rattling away for Scotland, at the utmost speed of the noble animals by which it was drawn.

Changing here, once more, the scene of our story, we return to the house of Professor Lockerby. There matters continued in that ominous state of quiescence, that significant and portentous calm, that precedes the bursting of the storm. Between the professor and the young earl, not a word more had passed on the subject of the latter's extraordinary declaration. Neither had made the slightest subsequent allusion to it, but continued their studies precisely as they had done before; although, perhaps, a degree of restraint —a consciousness of some point of difference between them —might now be discerned in their correspondence. Both, in short, seemed to have tacitly agreed to abide the result of the professor's letter to the countess, before taking any other step, or expressing any other feeling, on the subject to which that letter related. The anticipated crisis which the professor and his noble pupil were thus composedly awaiting, soon arrived. On the third day after that remarkable one on which the young Earl of Wistonbury had avowed the humble daughter of an humble Scotch farmer to be his wife, a carriage and four, which, we need scarcely say, was the same we saw start from Oxton Hall, drove furiously up to the door of Professor Lockerby. The horses' flanks sent forth clouds of smoke; their mouths and fore-shoulders were covered with foam; and the carriage itself was almost encased in mud. Everything, in short, told of a long and rapid journey. And it was so. Night and day, without one hour's intermission, had that carriage prosecuted its journey. In an instant after, the carriage stopped; its steps were down, and, bridling with high and lofty indignation, the Dowager Countess of Wistonbury

descended, and, ere any one of the professor's family were aware of her arrival, she had entered the house, the door being accidentally open, and was calling loudly for 'her boy.'

'Where is my son?' she exclaimed, as she made her way into the interior of the house: 'where is the Earl of Wistonbury?'

In a moment after the Earl of Wistonbury, who had heard and instantly recognized his mother's voice, was before her, and was about to rush into her arms, when she haughtily thrust him back, saying—

'Degraded, spiritless boy, dare not too approach me! You have blotted the noblest, the proudest scutcheon of England. Where is Professor Lockerby?'

The professor was by her side before she had completed the sentence, when, seeing her agitation—

'My good lady,' he said, in his most persuasive tone, 'do allow me to entreat of you to be composed, and to have the honour of conducting you up stairs.'

'Anywhere!—anywhere, professor!' exclaimed the countess; 'but, alas! go where I will, I cannot escape the misery of my own thoughts, nor the disgrace which my unworthy son has brought upon my head.'

Without making any reply to this outburst of passionate feeling, the professor took the countess respectfully by the hand, and silently conducted her to his drawing-room. With stately step the countess entered, and walked slowly to the further end of the apartment; this gained, she turned round, and, when she had done so, a sight awaited her for which she was but little prepared. This was her son and Jessy Flowerdew, kneeling side by side, and, by their attitude, eloquently imploring her forgiveness. It was just one of those sights best calculated to work on the nobler nature of the Countess of Wistonbury, and to call up the finer feelings of her generous heart.

For some seconds she looked at the kneeling pair in silent astonishment; her eye, however, chiefly fixed on the beauteous countenance of Jessy Flowerdew, pale with terror and emotion, and wet with tears. Having gazed for some time on this extraordinary sight, without betraying the slightest symptom of the feelings beyond that of surprise, with which it had inspired her, the countess slowly advanced towards the kneeling couple. She still, however, uttered no word, and discovered no emotion; but a sudden change had come over her proud spirit. That spirit was now laid, and its place occupied by all the generous impulses of her nature. Keeping her eye steadily fixed on the kneeling fair one before her, she approached her, paused a moment, extended her hand, placed it on the ivory forehead of Jessy Flowerdew, gently laid back her rich auburn hair, and, as she did so, said, in a tremulous, but emphatic voice—

'You *are*, indeed, a lovely girl! God bless you! Alfred, my son, rise,' she added, in a low, but calm and solemn tone; 'I forgive you.' And she extended her hand towards him. The earl seized it, kissed it affectionately, and bathed it with his tears.

'Rise, my lady—rise, my fair Countess of Wistonbury,' she now said, and herself aiding in the act she commanded, 'I acknowledge you as my daughter, and we must now see to fitting you to the high station to which my son's favour has promoted you, and of which, I trust, you will prove as worthy in point of conduct as you assuredly already are in that of personal beauty. God bless you both! And may every happiness that the conjugal state affords, be yours! Professor,' she added, and now turning round to that gentleman, 'you will think this weakness—a mother's weakness—and perhaps it is so—but I would myself fain attribute it to a more worthy feeling, and, if I know my own heart, it is so. But let that pass.

I *am* reconciled to the step my son has taken, and reverently leave it to God, and fearlessly to man, to judge of the motives by which I have been influenced. I trust they are such as to merit the approbation of both.'

Surprised, and greatly affected by the unexpected turn which matters had taken, so contrary to what he had anticipated, the worthy professor had listened to these expressions of the countess with averted head, and making the most ingenious use of the handkerchief which he held to his face that he could, to conceal the real purpose for which he employed it. When she had done—

'Madam,' he said, with great agitation and confusion of manner, and still busily plying the handkerchief in its pretended vocation—'Madam, I—I—I am surprised—much affected, I assure you—much affected, my lady—with this striking instance of what a noble and generous nature is capable. I was by no means prepared for it. It does you infinite honour, my lady—infinite honour; and will, I trust, in its result, be productive of all that happiness to you which your magnanimous conduct so eminently deserves.'

'I trust I have acted rightly, professor,' was the brief reply of the countess, as she again turned to the young couple, who were now standing on the floor beside her, 'I hope I have; and, if my heart does not deceive me, I am sure I have.'

'You are warranted, my lady, in the confidence you express in the uprightness, the generosity of your conduct on this very remarkable occasion—perfectly warranted,' replied the professor. 'It is an unexampled instance of greatness, of liberality of mind, and as such I must always look on it.'

Thus, then, terminated this extraordinary scene. It was subsequently arranged that the marriage of the earl should, in the meantime, be kept as secret as possible, and that

the young countess should, in the interim, be sent for a year or two to one of the most celebrated seminaries of female education in England, under an assumed name, and that, when she should have acquired the attainments and the polish befitting her high station, she should be produced to the world as the Countess of Wistonbury.

Acting upon this plan of proceedings, the same carriage that brought down the earl's mother, bore away, on the following day, together with that lady, the young earl and his bride; the latter, to commence her educational noviciate in England; the former, to while away the time as he best could until that noviciate should expire, a period which he proposed to render less irksome by a tour on the continent.

About two years after the occurrence of the events just related—it might be more, perhaps nearly three—Oxton Hall presented a scene of prodigious confusion and bustle. Little carts of provender were daily seen making frequent visits to the house. Huge old grates, in deserted kitchens, that had not been in use for a century before, were cleared of their rubbish, and glowing with blazing fires, at which enormous roasts were solemnly revolving. Menials were running to and fro in all directions, and a crowd of powdered and richly-liveried lackeys bustled backwards and forwards through the gorgeous apartments, loaded with silver plate, and bearing huge baskets of wine. Everything at Oxton Hall, in short, betokened preparations for a splendid fête—and such, in truth, was the case. To this fête all the nobility and gentry, within a circuit of ten to fifteen miles were invited; and such an affair it promised to be, altogether, as had not been seen at Oxton Hall since the marriage of the last earl—a period of nearly thirty years. None of those invited knew, or could guess, what was the particular reason for so extensive a merry-

making. Its scale, they learned, was most magnificent, and the invitations unprecedentedly numerous.

The whole affair was thus somewhat of a puzzle to the good people who were to figure as guests at the impending fête; but they comforted themselves with the reflection that they would know all about it by and by. In the meantime, the day appointed for the celebration of the proposed festival at Oxton Hall arrived; and, amongst the other preparations which more markedly characterized it, was the appearance of several long tables extended on the lawn in front of the house, and which were intended for the accommodation of the earl's tenantry, who were also invited to share in the coming festivities. Towards the afternoon of the day alluded to, carriages and vehicles of all descriptions, and of various degrees of elegance, were seen, in seemingly endless numbers, streaming along the spacious and well-gravelled walks that led, by many a graceful curve, through the surrounding lawn, to the noble portals of Oxton Hall. These, by turns, drew up in front of the principal entrance to the house, and delivered their several cargoes of lords and ladies, knights and squires, all honourable personages, and of high degree. An inferior description of equipages, again, and occupied by persons of a different class, sturdy yeomen and their wives and daughters, found ther way, or rather were guided as they came, to a different destination, but with no difference in the hospitality of their reception. All were alike welcome to Oxton Hall on this auspicious day. By and by the hour of dinner came, and, when it did, it exhibited a splendid scene in the magnificent dining-room of the Earl of Wistonbury. In this dining-room were assembled a party of at least a hundred-and-fifty ladies and gentlemen, all in their best attire. Down the middle of the spacious apartment ran a table of ample length and breadth, and capable of accommodating with ease even the formidable

array by which it was shortly to be surrounded. On this spacious board glittered as much wealth, in the shape of silver plate, as would have bought a barony, while everything around showed that it was still but a small portion of the riches of its noble owner. At the further end of the lordly hall, in an elevated recess or interior balcony, were stationed a band of musicians, to contribute the choicest specimens of the art to the hilarity of the evening. Altogether the scene was one of the most imposing that can well be conceived, an effect which was not a little heightened by the antique character of the noble apartment in which it was exhibited, one of whose most striking features was a large oriel window, filled with the most beautifully stained glass, which threw its subdued and sombre light on the magnificent scene beneath. Hitherto the young earl had not been seen by any of the company; his mother, the countess-dowager, having discharged the duties of hospitality in receiving the guests. Many were the inquiries made for the absent lord of the mansion; but these were all answered evasively, although always concluded with the assurance that he would appear in good time.

Satisfied with this assurance, the subject was no further pressed at the moment; but, as the dinner hour approached, and the earl had not yet presented himself, considerable curiosity and impatience began to be manifested amongst the assembled guests. These feelings increased every moment, and had attained their height, when the party found themselves called on to take their seats at table, and yet no earl had appeared. The general surprise was further excited on its being observed that the countess-dowager did not, as usual, take the chair at the head of the table, as was expected, but placed herself on its right. The chair at the foot of the table remained also yet unoccupied; and great was the wonder what all this could

mean. It was now soon to be explained. Just as the party had taken their seats, a folding-door, at the further end of the hall, flew open, and the young Earl of Wistonbury entered, leading by the hand a young female of exceeding beauty, attired in a dress of the most dazzling splendour, over which was gracefully thrown a Scottish plaid. Bowing slightly, but with a graceful and cordial expression, and smiling affably as he advanced, the earl conducted his fair charge to the head of the table, where, after a pause of a few seconds, which he purposely made in order to afford his guests an opportunity of marking the extreme loveliness of the lady whom he had thus so unexpectedly introduced to them—an opportunity which was not thrown away, as was evident from the murmur of admiration that ran round the brilliant assembly—the earl thus shortly addressed his wondering guests—

'Permit me, my friends,' he said, 'to introduce to you the Countess of Wistonbury!'

'A shout of applause from the gentlemen, and a waving of handkerchiefs by the ladies, hailed the pleasing and unexpected intelligence—an homage whose duration and intensity was increased by the singularly graceful manner with which it was received and acknowledged by her to whom it was paid. Nothing could be more captivating than the modest, winning sweetness of her smile, nothing more pleasing to behold than the gentle grace of her every motion. On all present the impression was that she was a woman of birth, education, and high breeding, and nothing in the part she subsequently acted tended in the slightest degree to affect this idea. The young and lovely countess conducted herself throughout the whole of this eventful evening, as she did throughout the remainder of her life, with the most perfect propriety; and thus evinced that the pains taken to fit Jessy Flowerdew for the high station to which a singular good fortune

had called her, was very far from having been taken in vain.

At the conclusion of the banquet, the earl entreated the indulgence of the company for an absence for himself and the countess of a quarter of an hour. This being of course readily acquiesced in, the earl and his beauteous young wife were seen, arm and arm, on the lawn, going towards the tables at which his tenantry were enjoying his hospitality. Here he went through precisely the same ceremony of introduction with that which we have described as having taken place in the banquet-hall; and here it was greeted with the same enthusiasm, and acknowledged by the countess with the same grace and propriety. This proceeding over, the earl and his young bride returned to their party, when one of the most joyous evenings followed that the banqueting-room of Oxton Hall had ever witnessed. There is only now to add, that Jessy Flowerdew's subsequent conduct as Countess of Wistonbury proved her in every respect worthy of the high place to which she had been elevated. "A mildness and gentleness of disposition, and a winning modesty of demeanour, which all the wealth and state with which she was surrounded could not in the slightest degree impair, distinguished her through life; and no less distinguished was she by the generosity and benevolence of her nature, a nature which her change of destiny was wholly unable to pervert."

Such, then, good reader, is the history of the lady whose portrait, in which she appears habited in a Scottish plaid, adorns, with others, the walls of the picture gallery of Oxton Hall, in Wiltshire.

MIDSIDE MAGGY;

OR,

THE BANNOCK O' TOLLISHILL.

"Every bannock had its maik, but the bannock o' Tollishill."
Scottish Proverb.

BELIKE, gentle reader, thou hast often heard the proverb quoted above, that "Every bannock had its maik, but the bannock o' Tollishill." The saying hath its origin in a romantic tradition of the Lammermoors, which I shall relate to thee. Tollishill is the name of a sheep-farm in Berwickshire, situated in the parish of Lauder. Formerly, it was divided into three farms, which were occupied by different tenants; and, by way of distinguishing it from the others, that in which dwelt the subjects of our present story was generally called Midside, and our heroine obtained the appellation of Midside Maggy. Tollishill was the property of John, second Earl, and afterwards Duke of Lauderdale—a personage whom I shall more than once, in these tales, have occasion to bring before mine readers, and whose character posterity hath small cause to hold in veneration. Yet it is a black character, indeed, in which there is not to be found one streak of sunshine; and the story of the "Bannock of Tollishill" referreth to such a streak in the history of John, the Lord of Thirlestane.

Time hath numbered somewhat more than a hundred and ninety years since Thomas Hardie became tenant of the principal farm of Tollishill. Now, that the reader may picture Thomas Hardie as he was, and as tradition hath described him, he or she must imagine a tall, strong, and

fresh-coloured man of fifty; a few hairs of grey mingling with his brown locks; a countenance expressive of much good nature and some intelligence; while a Lowland bonnet was drawn over his brow. The other parts of his dress were of coarse, grey, homespun cloth, manufactured in Earlston; and across his shoulders, in summer as well as in winter, he wore the mountain plaid. His principles assimilated to those held by the men of the covenant; but Thomas, though a native of the hills, was not without the worldly prudence which is considered as being more immediately the characteristic of the buying and selling children of society. His landlord was no favourer of the Covenant; and, though Thomas wished well to the cause, he did not see the necessity for making his laird, the Lord of Lauderdale, his enemy for its sake. He, therefore, judged it wise to remain a neutral spectator of the religious and political struggles of the period.

But Thomas was a bachelor. Half a century had he been in the world, and the eyes of no woman had had power to throw a spark into his heart. In his single, solitary state, he was happy, or he thought himself happy; and that is much the same thing. But an accident occurred which led him first to believe, and eventually to feel, that he was but a solitary and comfortless moorland farmer, toiling for he knew not what, and laying up treasure he knew not for whom. Yea, and while others had their wives spinning, carding, knitting, and smiling before them, and their bairns running laughing and sporting round about them, he was but a poor deserted creature, with nobody to care for, or to care for him. Every person had some object to strive for and to make them strive but Thomas Hardie; or, to use his own words, he was "just in the situation o' a tewhit that has lost its mate—*te-wheet! te-wheet!* it cried, flapping its wings impatiently and forlornly—and *te-wheet! te-wheet!* answered vacant echo frae the dreary glens."

Thomas had been to Morpeth disposing of a part of his hirsels, and he had found a much better market for them than he anticipated. He returned, therefore, with a heavy purse, which generally hath a tendency to create a light and merry heart; and he arrived at Westruther, and went into a hostel, where, three or four times in the year, he was in the habit of spending a cheerful evening with his friends. He had called for a quegh of the landlady's best, and he sat down at his ease with the liquor before him, for he had but a short way to travel. He also pulled out his tobacco-box and his pipe, and began to inhale the fumes of what, up to that period, was almost a forbidden weed. But we question much if the royal book of James the Sixth of Scotland and First of England, which he published against the use of tobacco, ever found its way into the Lammermoors, though the Indian weed did; therefore, Thomas Hardie sat enjoying his glass and his pipe, unconscious or regardless of the fulminations which he who was king in his boyhood, had published against the latter. But he had not sat long, when a fair maiden, an acquaintance of "mine hostess," entered the hostelry, and began to assist her in the cutting out or fashioning of a crimson kirtle. Her voice fell upon the ears of Thomas like the "music of sweet sounds." He had never heard a voice before that not only fell softly on his ear, but left a lingering murmur in his heart. She, too, was a young thing of not more than eighteen. If ever hair might be called "gowden," it was hers. It was a light and shining bronze, where the prevalence of the golden hue gave a colour to the whole. Her face was a thing of beauty, over which health spread its roseate hue, yet softly, as though the westling winds had caused the leaves of the blushing rose to kiss her cheeks, and leave their delicate hues and impression behind them. She was of a middle stature, and her figure was such, although arrayed in

homely garments, as would have commanded the worship of a connoisseur of grace and symmetry. But beyond all that kindled a flame within the hitherto obdurate heart of Thomas, was the witching influence of her smile. For a full hour he sat with his eyes fixed upon her; save at intervals, when he withdrew them to look into the unwonted agitation of his own breast, and examine the cause.

"Amongst the daughters of women," thought he unto himself—for he had a sprinkling of the language of the age about him—"none have I seen so beautiful. Her cheeks bloom bonnier than the heather on Tollishill, and her bosom seems saft as the new-shorn fleece. Her smile is like a blink o' sunshine, and would mak summer to those on whom it fell a' the year round."

He also discovered, for the first time, that "Tollishill was a dull place, especially in the winter season." When, therefore, the fair damsel had arrayed the fashion of the kirtle and departed, without once having seemed to observe Thomas, he said unto the goodwife of the hostelry—"And wha, noo, if it be a fair question, may that bonnie lassie be?"

"She is indeed a bonnie lassie," answered the landlady, "and a guid lassie, too; and I hae nae doot but, as ye are a single man, Maister Hardie, yer question is fair enough. Her name is Margaret Lylestone, and she is the only bairn o' a puir infirm widow that cam to live here some twa or thrée years syne. They cam frae south owre some way, and I am sure they hae seen better days. We thocht at first that the auld woman had been a Catholic; but I suppose that isna the case, though they certainly are baith o' them strong Episcopawlians, and in nae way favourable to the preachers or the word o' the Covenant; but I maun say for Maggie, that she is a bonny, sweet-tempered, and obleegin lassie—though, puir thing, her mother has brocht her up in a wrang way."

Many days had not passed ere Thomas Hardie, arrayed in his Sunday habiliments, paid another visit to Westruther; and he cautiously asked of the goodwife of the hostel many questions concerning Margaret; and although she jeered him, and said that "Maggy would ne'er think o' a grey-haired carle like him," he brooded over the fond fancy; and although on this visit he saw her not, he returned to Tollishill, thinking of her as his bride. It was a difficult thing for a man of fifty, who had been the companion of solitude from his youth upwards, and who had lived in single blessedness amidst the silence of the hills, without feeling the workings of the heart, or being subjected to the influence of its passions—I say, it was indeed difficult for such a one to declare, in the ear of a blooming maiden of eighteen, the tale of his first affections. But an opportunity arrived which enabled him to disembosom the burden that pressed upon his heart.

It has been mentioned that Margaret Lyleston and her mother were poor; and the latter, who had long been bowed down with infirmities, was supported by the industry of her daughter. They had also a cow, which was permitted to graze upon the hills without fee or reward; and, with the milk which it produced, and the cheese they manufactured, together with the poor earnings of Margaret, positive want was long kept from them. But the old woman became more and more infirm—the hand of death seemed stretching over her. She required nourishment which Margaret could not procure for her; and, that it might be procured—that her mother might live and not die—the fair maiden sent the cow to Kelso to be sold, from whence the seller was to bring with him the restoratives that her parent required.

Now, it so was that Thomas Hardie, the tenant of Tollishill, was in Kelso market when the cow of Widow Lylestone was offered for sale; and, as it possessed the

characteristic marks of a good milcher, he inquired to whom it belonged. On being answered, he turned round for a few moments, and stood thoughtful; but again turning to the individual who had been intrusted to dispose of it, he inquired—

"And wherefore is she selling it?"

"Really, Maister Hardie," replied the other, "I could not positively say, but I hae little doot it is for want—absolute necessity. The auld woman's very frail and very ill—I hae to tak a' sort o' things oot to her the nicht frae the doctor's, after selling the cow, and it's no in the power o' things that her dochter, industrious as she is, should be able to get them for her otherwise."

Thomas again turned aside, and drew his sleeve across his eyes. Having inquired the price sought for the cow, he handed the money to the seller, and gave the animal in charge to one of his herdsmen. He left the market earlier than usual, and directed his servant that the cow should be taken to Westruther.

It was drawing towards gloaming before Thomas approached the habitation of the widow; and, before he could summon courage to enter it for the first time, he sauntered for several minutes, backward and forward on the moor, by the side of the Blackadder, which there silently wends its way, as a dull and simple burn, through the moss. He felt all the awkwardness of an old man struggling beneath the influence of a young feeling. He thought of what he should say, how he should act, and how he would be received. At length he had composed a short introductory and explanatory speech which pleased him. He thought it contained both feeling and delicacy (according to his notions of the latter) in their proper proportions, and after repeating it three or four times over by the side of the Blackadder, he proceeded towards the cottage, still repeating it to himself as he went. But,

when he raised his hand and knocked at the door, his heart gave a similar knock upon his bosom, as though it mimicked him; and every idea, every word of the introductory speech which he had studied and repeated again and again, short though it was, was knocked from his memory. The door was opened by Margaret, who invited him to enter. She was beautiful as when he first beheld her—he thought more beautiful—for she now spoke to him. Her mother sat in an arm-chair, by the side of the peat fire, and was supported by pillows. He took off his bonnet, and performed an awkward but his best salutation.

"I beg your pardon," said he, hesitatingly, "for the liberty I have taken in calling upon you. But—I was in Kelso the day—and"——He paused, and turned his bonnet once or twice in his hands. "And," he resumed, "I observed, or rather, I should say, I learned that ye intended to sell your cow; but I also heard that ye was very ill, and"——Here he made another pause. "I say I heard that ye was very ill, and I thocht it would be a hardship for ye to part wi' crummie, and especially at a time when ye are sure to stand maist in need o' every help. So I bought the cow—but, as I say, it would be a very great hardship for ye to be without the milk, and what the cheese may bring, at a time like this; and, therefore, I hae ordered her to be brocht back to ye, and ane o' my men will bring her hame presently. Never consider the cow as mine, for a bachelor farmer like me can better afford to want the siller, than ye can to want yer cow; and I micht hae spent it far mair foolishly, and wi' less satisfaction. Indeed, if ye only but think that good I've dune, I'm mair than paid."

"Maister Hardie," said the widow, "what have I, a stranger widow woman, done to deserve this kindness at your hands? Or how is it in the power o' words for me to thank ye? HE who provideth for the widow and the fatherless will not permit you to go unrewarded, though I

cannot. O Margaret, hinny," added she, "thank our benefactor as we ought to thank him, for I cannot."

Fair Margaret's thanks were a flood of tears.

"Oh, dinna greet!" said Thomas; "I would ten times ower rather no hae bocht the cow, but hae lost the siller, than I would hae been the cause o' a single tear rowin' doun yer bonny cheeks."

"O sir," answered the widow, "but they are tears o' gratitude that distress my bairn, and nae tears are mair precious."

I might tell how Thomas sat down by the peat fire between the widow and her daughter, and how he took the hand of the latter, and entreated her to dry up her tears, saying that his chief happiness would be to be thought their friend, and to deserve their esteem. The cow was brought back to the widow's, and Thomas returned to Tollishill with his herdsman. But, from that night, he became almost a daily visitor at the house of Mrs. Lylestone. He provided whatever she required—all that was ordered for her. He spoke not of love to Margaret, but he wooed her through his kindness to her mother. It was, perhaps, the most direct avenue to her affections. Yet it was not because Thomas thought so that he pursued this course, but because he wanted confidence to make his appeal in a manner more formal or direct.

The widow lingered many months; and all that lay within the power of human means he caused to be done for her, to restore her to health and strength, or at least to smooth her dying pillow But the last was all that could be done. Where death spreadeth the shadow of his wing, there is no escape from sinking beneath the baneful influence of its shade. Mrs. Lylestone, finding that the hour of her departure drew near, took the hand of her benefactor, and when she had thanked him for all the kindness which he had shown towards her, she added—

"But, O sir, there is one thing that makes the hand of death heavy. When the sod is cauld upon my breast, who will look after my puir orphan—my bonny faitherless and motherless Margaret? Where will she find a hame?"

"O mem," said Thomas, "if the like o' me durst say it, she needna hae far to gang, to find a hame and a heart too. Would she only be mine, I would be her protector —a' that I have should be hers."

A gleam of joy brightened in the eye of the dying widow.

"'Margaret!'" she exclaimed, faintly; and Margaret laid her face upon the bed, and wept. "O my bairn! my puir bairn!" continued her mother, "shall I see ye protected and provided for before I am 'where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest,' which canna be lang noo?"

Thomas groaned—tears glistened in his eyes—he held his breath in suspense. The moment of trial, of condemnation or acquittal, of happiness or misery, had arrived. With an eager impatience he waited to hear her answer. But Margaret's heart was prepared for his proposal. He had first touched it with gratitude—he had obtained her esteem; and where these sentiments prevail in the bosom of a woman whose affections have not been bestowed upon another, love is not far distant—if it be not between them, and a part of both.

"Did ever I disobey you, mother?" sobbed Margaret, raising her parent's hand to her lips.

"No, my bairn, no!" answered the widow. And raising herself in the bed, she took her daughter's hand and placed it in the hand of Thomas Hardie.

"Oh!" said he, "is this possible? Does my bonny Margaret really consent to make me the happiest man on earth? Shall I hae a gem at Tollishill that I wadna exchange for a monarch's diadem?"

It is sufficient to say that the young and lovely Margaret Lylestone became Mrs. Hardie of Tollishill; or, as she was generally called, "*Midside Maggie.*" Her mother died within three months after their marriage, but died in peace, having, as she said, "seen her dear bairn blessed wi' a leal and a kind guidman, and ane that was weel to do."

For two years after their marriage, and not a happier couple than Thomas and Midside Maggie was to be found on all the long Lammermoors, in the Merse, nor yet in the broad Lothians. They saw the broom and the heather bloom in their season, and they heard the mavis sing before their dwelling; yea, they beheld the snow falling on the mountains, and the drift sweeping down the glens; but while the former delighted, the latter harmed them not, and from all they drew mutual joy and happiness. Thomas said that "Maggy was a matchless wife;" and she that "he was a kind, kind husband."

But the third winter was one of terror among the hills. It was near the new year; the snow began to fall on a Saturday, and when the following Friday came, the storm had not ceased. It was accompanied by frost and a fierce wind, and the drift swept and whirled like awful pillars of alabaster, down the hills, and along the glens—

"Sweeping the flocks and herds."

Fearful was the wrath of the tempest on the Lammermoors. Many farmers suffered severely, but none more severely than Thomas Hardie of Tollishill. Hundreds of his sheep had perished in a single night. He was brought from prosperity to the brink of adversity.

But another winter came round. It commenced with a severity scarce inferior to that which had preceded it, and again scores of his sheep were buried in the snow. But February had not passed, and scarce had the sun entered what is represented as the astronomical sign of the *two fish*, in the heavens, when the genial influence of spring fell with

almost summer warmth upon the earth. During the night the dews came heavily on the ground, and the sun sucked it up in a vapour. But the herbage grew rapidly, and the flocks ate of it greedily, and licked the dew ere the sun rose to dry it up. It brought the murrain amongst them; they died by hundreds; and those that even fattened, but did not die, no man would purchase; or, if purchased, it was only upon the understanding that the money should be returned if the animals were found unsound. These misfortunes were too much for Thomas Hardie. Within two years he found himself a ruined man. But he grieved not for the loss of his flocks, nor yet for his own sake, but for that of his fair young wife, whom he loved as the apple of his eye. Many, when they heard of his misfortunes, said that they were sorry for bonny Midside Maggy.

But, worst of all, the rent-day of Thomas Hardie drew near; and for the first time since he had held a farm, he was unable to meet his landlord with his money in his hand. Margaret beheld the agony of his spirit, and she knew its cause. She put on her Sunday hood and kirtle; and professing to her husband that she wished to go to Lauder, she took her way to Thirlestane Castle, the residence of their proud landlord, before whom every tenant in arrear trembled. With a shaking hand she knocked at the hall door, and after much perseverance and entreaty, was admitted into the presence of the haughty earl. She curtsied low before him.

"Well, what want ye, my bonny lass?" said Lauderdale, eyeing her significantly.

"May it please yer lordship," replied Margaret, "I am the wife o' yer tenant, Thomas Hardie o' Tollishill; an' a guid tenant he has been to yer lordship for twenty years and mair, as yer lordship maun weel ken."

"He has been my tenant for more than twenty years,

say ye?" interrupted Lauderdale; "and ye say ye are his wife: why, looking on thy bonny face, I should say that the heather hasna bloomed twenty times on the knowes o' Tollishill since thy mother bore thee. Yet ye say ye are his wife! Beshrew me, but Thomas Hardie is a man o' taste. Arena ye his daughter?"

"No, my lord; his first, his only, an' his lawfu' wife—an' I would only say, that to ye an' yer faither before ye, for mair than twenty years, he has paid his rent regularly an' faithfully; but the seasons hae visited us sairly, very sairly, for twa years successively, my lord, an' the drift has destroyed, an' the rot rooted oot oor flocks, sae that we are hardly able to haud up oor heads amang oor neebors, and to meet yer lordship at yer rent-day is oot o' oor power; therefore hae I come to ye to implore ye, that we may hae time to gather oor feet, an' to gie yer lordship an' every man his due, when it is in oor power."

"Hear me, guidwife," rejoined the earl; "were I to listen to such stories as yours, I might have every farmer's wife on my estates coming whimpering and whinging, till I was left to shake a purse with naething in't, and allowing others the benefit o' my lands. But it is not every day that a face like yours comes in the shape o' sorrow before me; and, for ae kiss o' your cherry mou', (and ye may take my compliments to your auld man for his taste,) ye shall have a discharge for your half-year's rent, and see if that may set your husband on his feet again."

"Na, yer lordship, na!" replied Margaret; "it would ill become ony woman in my situation in life, an' especially a married ane, to be daffin with sic as yer lordship. I am the wife o' Thomas Hardie, wha is a guid guidman to me, an' I cam here this day to entreat ye to deal kindly wi' him in the day o' his misfortune."

"Troth," replied Lauderdale—who could feel the force of virtue in others, though he did not always practise it

in his own person—"I hae heard o' the blossom o' Tollishill before, an' a bonny flower ye are to blossom in an auld man's bower; but I find ye modest as ye are bonny, an' upon one condition will I grant yer request. Ye hae tauld me o' yer hirsels being buried wi' the drift, an' that the snaw has covered the May primrose on Leader braes; now it is Martinmas, an' if in June ye bring me a snowball, not only shall ye be quit o' yer back rent, but ye shall sit free in Tollishill till Martinmas next. But see that in June ye bring me the snowball or the rent."

Margaret made her obeisance before the earl, and, thanking him, withdrew. But she feared the coming of June; for to raise the rent even then she well knew would be a thing impossible, and she thought also it would be equally so to preserve a snow-ball beneath the melting sun of June. Though young, she had too much prudence and honesty to keep a secret from her husband; it was her maxim, and it was a good one, that "there ought to be no secrets between a man and his wife, which the one would conceal from the other." She therefore told him of her journey to Thirlestane, and of all that had passed between her and the earl. Thomas kissed her cheek, and called her his "bonny, artless Maggy;" but he had no more hope of seeing a snowball in June than she had, and he said, "the bargain was like the bargain o' a crafty Lauderdale."

Again the winter storms howled upon the Lammermoors, and the snow lay deep upon the hills. Thomas and his herdsmen were busied in exertions to preserve the remainder of his flocks; but, one day, when the westling winds breathed with a thawing influence upon the snow-clad hills, Margaret went forth to where there was a small, deep, and shadowed ravine by the side of the Leader. In it the rivulet formed a pool, and seemed to sleep, and there the grey trout loved to lie at ease; for a high dark

rock, over which the brushwood grew, overhung it, and the rays of the sun fell not upon it. In the rock, and near the side of the stream, was a deep cavity, and Margaret formed a snowball on the brae top, and she rolled it slowly down into the shadowed glen, till it attained the magnitude of an avalanche in miniature. She trode upon it, and pressed it firmly together, till it obtained almost the hardness and consistency of ice. She rolled it far into the cavity, and blocked up the mouth of the aperture, so that neither light nor air might penetrate the strange coffer in which she had deposited the equally strange rent of Tollis-hill. Verily, common as ice-houses are in our day, let not Midside Maggy be deprived of the merit of their invention.

I have said that it was her maxim to keep no secret from her husband; but, as it is said there is no rule without an exception, even so it was in the case of Margaret, and there was one secret which she communicated not to Thomas, and that was—the secret of the hidden snowball.

But June came, and Thomas Hardie was a sorrowful man. He had in no measure overcome the calamities of former seasons, and he was still unprepared with his rent. Margaret shared not his sorrow, but strove to cheer him, and said—

"We shall hae a snawba' in June, though I climb to the top o' Cheviot for it."

"O my bonny lassie," replied he—and he could see the summit of Cheviot from his farm—"dinna deceive yersel' wi' what could only be words spoken in jest; but, at ony rate, I perceive there has been nae snaw on Cheviot for a month past."

Now, not a week had passed, but Margaret had visited the aperture in the ravine, where the snowball was concealed, not through idle curiosity, to perceive whether it had melted away, but more effectually to stop up every

crevice that might have been made in the materials with which she had blocked up the mouth of the cavity.

But the third day of the dreadful month had not passed, when a messenger arrived at Tollishill from Thirlestane with the abrupt mandate—"*June has come!*"

"And we shall be at Thirlestane the morn," answered Margaret.

"O my doo," said Thomas, "what nonsense are ye talk ing!—that isna like ye, Margaret; I'll be in Greenlaw Jail the morn; and oor bits o' things in the hoose, and oor flocks, will be seized by the harpies o' the law—and the only thing that distresses me is, what is to come o' you hinny."

"Dinna dree the death ye'll never dee," said Margaret affectionately; "we shall see, if we be spared, what the morn will bring."

"The fortitude o' yer mind, Margaret," said Thomas, taking her hand; and he intended to have said more, to have finished a sentence in admiration of her worth, but his heart filled, and he was silent.

On the following morning, Margaret said unto him—

"Now, Thomas, if ye are ready, we'll gang to Thirlestane. It is aye waur to expect or think o' an evil than to face it."

"Margaret, dear," said he, "I canna comprehend ye—wherefore should I thrust my head into the lion's den? It will soon enough seek me in my path."

Nevertheless, she said unto him, "Come," and bade him be of good heart; and he rose and accompanied her. But she conducted him to the deep ravine, where the waters seem to sleep and no sunbeam ever falls; and, as she removed the earth and the stones, with which she had blocked up the mouth of the cavity in the rock, he stood wondering. She entered the aperture, and rolled forth the firm mass of snow, which was yet too large to be lifted by hands. When Thomas saw this, he smiled and

wept at the same instant, and he pressed his wife's cheek to his bosom, and said—

"Great has been the care o' my poor Margaret; but it is o' no avail; for, though ye hae proved mair than a match for the seasons, the proposal was but a jest o' Lauderdale."

"What is a man but his word?" replied Margaret; "and him a nobleman too."

"Nobility are but men," answered Thomas, "and seldom better men than ither folk. Believe me, if we were to gang afore him wi' a snawba' in oor hands, we should only get lauched at for our pains."

"It was his ain agreement," added she; "and, at ony rate, we can be naething the waur for seeing if he will abide by it."

Breaking the snowy mass, she rolled up a portion of it in a napkin, and they went towards Thirlestane together; though often did Thomas stop by the way and say—

"Margaret, dear, I'm perfectly ashamed to gang upon this business; as sure as I am standing here, as I have tauld ye, we will only get oorselves lauched at."

"I would rather be lauched at," added she, "than despised for breaking my word; and, if oor laird break his noo, wha wadna despise him?"

Harmonious as their wedded life had hitherto been, there was what might well nigh be called bickerings between them on the road; for Thomas felt or believed that she was leading him on a fool's errand. But they arrived at the castle of Thirlestane, and were ushered into the mansion of its proud lord.

"Ha!" said the earl, as they entered, "bonny Midside Maggy and her auld guidman! Well, what bring ye?—the rents o' Tollishill, or their equivalent?" Thomas looked at his young wife, for he saw nothing to give him hope on the countenance of Lauderdale, and he

thought that he pronounced the word "*equivalent*" with a sneer.

"I bring ye snaw in June, my lord," replied Margaret, "agreeably to the terms o' yer bargain; and I'm sorry, for your sake and oors, that it hasna yet been in oor power to bring gowd instead o't."

Loud laughed the earl as Margaret unrolled the huge snowball before him; and Thomas thought unto himself, "I said how it would be." But Lauderdale, calling for his writing materials, sat down and wrote, and he placed in the hands of Thomas a discharge, not only for his back rent, but for all that should otherwise be due at the ensuing Martinmas.

Thomas Hardie bowed and bowed again before the earl, low and yet lower, awkwardly and still more awkwardly, and he endeavoured to thank him, but his tongue faltered in the performance of its office. He could have taken his hand in his and wrung it fervently, leaving his fingers to express what his tongue could not; but his laird was an earl, and there was a necessary distance to be observed between an earl and a Lammermoor farmer.

"Thank not me, goodman," said Lauderdale, "but thank the modesty and discretion o' yer winsome wife."

Margaret was silent; but gratitude for the kindness which the earl had shown unto her husband and herself took deep root in her heart. Gratitude, indeed, formed the predominating principle in her character, and fitted her even for acts of heroism.

The unexpected and unwonted generosity of the earl had enabled Thomas Hardie to overcome the losses with which the fury of the seasons had overwhelmed him, and he prospered beyond any farmer on the hills. But, while he prospered, the Earl of Lauderdale, in his turn, was overtaken by adversity. The stormy times of the civil wars raged, and it is well known with what devotedness Lauder-

dale followed the fortunes of the king. When the Commonwealth began, he was made prisoner, conveyed to London, and confined in the Tower. There, nine years of captivity crept slowly and gloomily over him; but they neither taught him mercy to others nor to moderate his ambition, as was manifested when power and prosperity again cast their beams upon him. But he now lingered in the Tower, without prospect or hope of release, living upon the bare sustenance of a prisoner, while his tenants dwelt on his estates, and did as they pleased with his rents, as though they should not again behold the face of a landlord.

But Midside Maggy grieved for the fate of him whose generosity had brought prosperity, such as they had never known before, to herself and to her husband; and, in the fulness of her gratitude, she was ever planning schemes for his deliverance; and she urged upon her husband that it was their duty to attempt to deliver their benefactor from captivity, as he had delivered them from the iron grasp of ruin, when misfortune lay heavily on them. Now, as duly as the rent-day came, from the Martinmas to which the snowball had been his discharge, Thomas Hardie faithfully and punctually locked away his rent to the last farthing, that he might deliver it into the hands of his laird, should he again be permitted to claim his own; but he saw not in what way they could attempt his deliverance, as his wife proposed.

"Thomas," said she, "there are ten lang years o' rent due, and we hae the siller locked away. It is o' nae use to us, for it isna oors; but it may be o' use to him. It would enable him to fare better in his prison, and maybe to put a handfu' o' gowd into the hands o' his keepers, and thereby to escape abroad, and it wad furnish him wi' the means o' living when he was abroad. Remember his kindness to us, and think that there is nae sin equal to the sin o' ingratitude."

"But," added Thomas, "in what way could we get the money to him? for, if we were to send it, it would never reach him, and, as a prisoner, he wouldna be allooed to receive it."

"Let us tak it to him oorsels, then," said Margaret.

"Tak it oorsels!" exclaimed Thomas, in amazement, "a' the way to London! It is oot o' the question a'thegither, Margaret. We wad be robbed o' every plack before we got half-way; or, if we were even there, hoo, in a' the world, do ye think we could get it to him, or that we would be allooed to see him?"

"Leave that to me," was her reply; "only say ye will gang, and a' that shall be accomplished. There is nae obstacle in the way but the want o' yer consent. But the debt, and the ingratitude o' it thegither, hang heavy upon my heart."

Thomas at length yielded to the importunities of his wife, and agreed that they should make a pilgrimage to London, to pay his rent to his captive laird; though how they were to carry the gold in safety, through an unsettled country, a distance of more than three hundred miles, was a difficulty he could not overcome. But Margaret removed his fears; she desired him to count out the gold, and place it before her; and when he had done so, she went to the meal-tub and took out a quantity of pease and of barley meal mixed, sufficient to knead a goodly fadge or bannock; and, when she had kneaded it, and rolled it out, she took the golden pieces and pressed them into the paste of the embryo bannock, and again she doubled it together, and again rolled it out, and kneaded into it the remainder of the gold. She then fashioned it into a thick bannock, and placing it on the hearth, covered it with the red ashes of the peats.

Thomas sat marvelling, as the formation of the singular purse proceeded, and when he beheld the operation com-

pleted, and the bannock placed upon the hearth to bake, he only exclaimed—"Weel, woman's ingenuity dings a'! I wadna hae thocht o' the like o' that, had I lived a thoosand years! O Margaret, hinny, but ye are a strange ane."

"Hoots," replied she, "I'm sure ye micht easily hae imagined that it was the safest plan we could hae thocht upon to carry the siller in safety; for I am sure there isna a thief between the Tweed and Lon'on toun, that would covet or carry awa a bear bannock."

"Troth, my doo, and I believe ye're richt," replied Thomas; "but wha could hae thocht o' sic an expedient? Sure there never was a bannock baked like the bannock o' Tollishill."

On the third day after this, an old man and a fair lad, before the sun had yet risen, were observed crossing the English Border. They alternately carried a wallet across their shoulders, which contained a few articles of apparel and a bannock. They were dressed as shepherds, and passengers turned and gazed on them as they passed along; for the beauty of the youth's countenance excited their admiration. Never had Lowland bonnet covered so fair a brow. The elder stranger was Thomas Hardie, and the youth none other than his Midside Maggy.

I will not follow them through the stages of their long and weary journey, nor dwell upon the perils and adventures they encountered by the way. But, on the third week after they had left Tollishill, and when they were beyond the town called Stevenage, and almost within sight of the metropolis, they were met by an elderly military-looking man, who, struck with the lovely countenance of the seeming youth, their dress, and way-worn appearance, accosted them, saying—"Good morrow, strangers; ye seem to have travelled far. Is this fair youth your son, old man?"

"He is a gay sib freend," answered Thomas.

"And whence come ye?" continued the stranger.

"Frae Leader Haughs, on the bonny Borders o' the north countrie," replied Margaret.

"And whence go ye?" resumed the other.

"First tell me wha ye may be that are sae inquisitive," interrupted Thomas, in a tone which betrayed something like impatience.

"Some call me George Monk," replied the stranger mildly, "others, Honest George. I am a general in the Parliamentary army." Thomas reverentially raised his hand to his bonnet, and bowed his head.

"Then pardon me, sir," added Margaret, "and if ye indeed be the guid and gallant general, sma' offence will ye tak at onything that may be said amiss by a country laddie. We are tenants o' the Lord o' Lauderdale, whom ye now keep in captivity; and, though we mayna think as he thinks, yet we never faund him but a guid landlord; and little guid, in my opinion, it can do ony body to keep him, as he has been noo for nine years, caged up like a bird. Therefore, though oor ain business that has brocht us up to London should fail, I winna regret the journey, since it has afforded me an opportunity o' seein yer Excellency, and soliciting yer interest, which maun be pooerfu' in behalf o' oor laird, and that ye would release him frae his prison, and, if he michtna remain in this countrie, obtain permission for him to gang abroad."

"Ye plead fairly and honestly for yer laird, fair youth," returned the general; "yet, though he is no man to be trusted, I needs say he hath had his portion of captivity measured out abundantly; and, since ye have minded me of him, ere a week go round I will think of what may be done for Lauderdale." Other questions were asked and answered—some truly, and some evasively; and Thomas and Margaret, blessing Honest George

in their hearts, went on their way rejoicing at having met him.

On arriving in London, she laid aside the shepherd's garb in which she had journeyed, and resumed her wonted apparel. On the second day after their arrival, she went out upon Tower-hill, dressed as a Scottish peasant girl, with a basket on her arm; and in the basket were a few ballads, and the bannock of Tollishill. She affected silliness, and, acting the part of a wandering minstrel, went singing her ballads towards the gate of the Tower. Thomas followed her at a distance. Her appearance interested the guard; and as she stood singing before the gate—"What want ye, pretty face?" inquired the officer of the guard. "Your alms, if you please," said she, smiling innocently, "and to sing a bonny Scotch sang to the Laird o' Lauderdale."

The officer and the sentinels laughed; and, after she had sung them another song or two, she was permitted to enter the gate, and a soldier pointed out to her the room in which Lauderdale was confined. On arriving before the grated windows of his prison, she raised her eyes towards them, and began to sing "*Leader Haughs.*" The wild, sweet melody of his native land, drew Lauderdale to the windows of his prison-house, and in the countenance of the minstrel he remembered the lovely features of Midside Maggy. He requested permission of the keeper that she should be admitted to his presence; and his request was complied with.

"Bless thee, sweet face!" said the earl, as she was admitted into his prison; and you have not forgotten the snowball in June?" And he took her hand to raise it to his lips.

"Hooly, hooly, my guid lord," said she, withdrawing her hand; "my fingers were made for nae sic purpose—Thomas Hardie is here"—and she laid her hand upon her fair bosom—"though now standing without the yett o' the

Tower." Lauderdale again wondered, and, with a look of mingled curiosity and confusion, inquired—"Wherefore do ye come—and why do ye seek me?" "I brocht ye a snaw-ba' before," said she, "for yer rent—I bring ye a bannock noo." And she took the bannock from the basket and placed it before him.

"Woman," added he, "are ye really as demented as I thocht ye but feigned to be, when ye sang before the window."

"The proof o' the bannock," replied Margaret, "will be in the breakin' o't."

"Then, goodwife, it will not be easily proved," said he—and he took the bannock, and, with some difficulty, broke it over his knee; but, when he beheld the golden coins that were kneaded through it, for the first, perhaps the last and only time in his existence, the Earl of Lauderdale burst into tears and exclaimed—"Well, every bannock has its maik, but the bannock o' Tollishill! Yet, kind as ye hae been, the gold is useless to ane that groans in hopeless captivity."

"Yours has been a long captivity," said Margaret; "but it is not hopeless; and, if honest General Monk is to be trusted, from what he tauld me not three days by-gane, before a week gae roond, ye will be at liberty to go abroad, and there the bannock o' Tollishill may be o' use."

The wonder of Lauderdale increased, and he replied—"Monk will keep his word—but what mean ye of him?"

And she related to him the interview they had had with the general by the way. Lauderdale took her hand, a ray of hope and joy spread over his face, and he added—

"Never shall ye rue the bakin' o' the bannock, if auld times come back again."

Margaret left the tower, singing as she had entered it, and joined her husband, whom she found leaning over the railing around the moat, and anxiously waiting her return.

They spent a few days more in London, to rest and to gaze upon its wonders, and again set out upon their journey to Tollishill. General Monk remembered his promise; within a week, the Earl of Lauderdale was liberated, with permission to go abroad, and there, as Margaret had intimated, he found the bannock of Tollishill of service.

A few more years passed round, during which old Thomas Hardie still prospered; but, during those years, the Commonwealth came to an end, the king was recalled, and with him, as one of his chief favourites, returned the Earl of Lauderdale. And, when he arrived in Scotland, clothed with power, whatever else he forgot, he remembered the bannock of Tollishill. Arrayed in what might have passed as royal state, and attended by fifty of his followers, he rode to the dwelling of Thomas Hardie and Midside Maggy; and when they came forth to meet him, he dismounted and drew forth a costly silver girdle of strange workmanship, and fastened it round her jimp waist, saying—"Wear this, for now it is my turn to be grateful, and for your husband's life, and your life, and the life of the generation after ye" (for they had children), "ye shall sit rent free on the lands ye now farm. For, truly, every bannock had its maik but the bannock o' Tollishill."

Thomas and Margaret felt their hearts too full to express their thanks; and ere they could speak, the earl, mounting his horse, rode towards Thirlestane; and his followers, waving their bonnets, shouted—"Long live Midside Maggy, queen of Tollishill."

Such is the story of "The Bannock o' Tollishill;" and it is only necessary to add, for the information of the curious, that I believe the silver girdle may be seen until this day, in the neighbourhood of Tollishill, and in the possession of a descendant of Midside Maggy, to whom it was given.

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